MS # P-041kk

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE ARMY HIGH COMMAND

Their Effects Upon Its Organization

(OKH Project # 7)

By

Oldwig von Natzmer
Generalleutnant

Translator: P.W. Luetzkendorf
Editor : P.L. Muschamp
Reviewer : Capt. N. Devereux

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MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF, FOREIGN MILITARY STUDIES BRANCH

SUBJECT: Review of attached study

1. The following comments are made as a result of my review of MS # P-041 kk, "The Theoretical Foundations of the Army High Command and their Effect on its Organization."

2. This manuscript contains six studies and a summary. The six principal authors are Generals Blumentritt, Foertsch, Koch-Erpach, Roehricht, Von Schell, and Westphal. The summary was prepared by General von Natzmer. All six studies deal with the same topic, namely the historical development of OKH from the time of Clausewitz down to the close of World War II. The authors are more concerned with the development of military philosophy and doctrine than with organizational changes.

3. This manuscript is a part of a series on the German Army High Command, and is a conclusion to the whole work.

4. Local reproduction is not recommended.

NICHOLAS E. DEVEREUX
Capt Arty
Military Editor

HISTORICAL DIVISION
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BRANCH Foreign Military Studies Branch

REVIEW OF MS # P-041 kk, Theoretical Foundations of the Army High Command
(Title of Document)

REVIEWERS NAME Col. W.S. Nye DATE 12 Aug 52

Item	Page	Par	Line	Comment
				Additional comments by Division Chief:
				1. This collection of essays, all dealing with the same subject, will be read with interest and pleasure by the instructors and some of the students at the general service schools. While the material may not be as noteworthy as the writings of du Picq, much of it is similar in character. It varies from straight historical treatment through historical-analytical to straight military philosophy. It is not the type of writing which can be examined cursorily; it must be read slowly, carefully, thoughtfully.
				2. If OCMH desires to reproduce all or part of this study "in parchment" I would suggest that only two or three of the studies be selected for this purpose. While all are excellent, and have somewhat different points of view and treatment, they are necessarily repetitious. As to which studies are most meritorious or worthy of reproduction, there will probably be as many opinions as there are readers. I am inclined to favor Westphal's study as being simplest, clearest, and easiest to read. Blumentritt is, as usual, entertaining and even profound. However, past the midpoint his essay seems to be rather loosely organized and inclined to wonder. I found Foertsch to be perhaps the most authoritative, but a bit ponderous. Koch-Erpach, not known to me, has an excellent essay which contains an occasional brilliant, if somewhat mystical, passage like: "Total war is a pearl necklace of selected measures strung along a strong line of conduct."
				Roehricht's essay could be omitted.
				In case any of these studies are reproducted, von Schell's 9-page monograph should be included. His subject is motorization and mechanization, and he is or was the outstanding authority on this in Germany. Von Schell graduated from the U.S. Infantry School at Fort Benning in 1932, and his lectures and writings in

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				the United States were much admired during The Thirties. During the war he "fell out" with Hitler and was retired prematurely, thus not attaining the high rank which his brilliant early career seemed to promise.
				Von Natzmer's summary is probably a distillation of Generaloberst Halder's views, and is thus entitled to careful consideration. However, it is as he says "a concluding word", and in a reproduced pamphlet should be placed at the end as a postscript rather than precede the other studies as a forword.
				W.S. NYE Colonel, Artillery Chief, Historical Division

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The Topic Leader and Principal Author

Oldwig von MATZNER, GSC
Generalleutnant
Date of Birth: 29 June 1904
Place of Birth: Liegnitz, Silesia

General von MATZNER received training in the Dresden Infantry Training School in 1926, the Hannover Cavalry Training School in 1927 and in the Military Academy, Berlin, in 1936/37.

In World War II he served as chief of operation staff at division level in Italy and in Russia until 1943. In 1944 he was promoted to the rank of Generalmajor and assigned to Army Group Kurland as chief of staff. Promotion to the rank of Generalleutnant came in 1945, in which year General von MATZNER was chief of staff in Army Group Nord and later in Army Group Mitte, both in Russia.

The Author of Appendix 1

Guenther BLUMENTRITT
General der Infanterie
Date of Birth: 10 February 1892
Place of Birth: Munich, Germany

Commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1912 after training in the Dansig Officer Candidate Training School, BLUMENTRITT fought on the west and east fronts in World War I as platoon, company, and battalion leader. After postwar service in a volunteer corps in Munich, Saxony and Silesia from January to October 1919, he was assigned to the 15th Infantry Regiment of Germany's post-World War I Army. In 1920/22 he attended the War Colleges at Stuttgart and Berlin and in 1932/33 continued his studies on history, political science and national economy at the Berlin University.

Promoted colonel in 1938, Generalmajor in January 1942, Generalleutnant in December of the same year, and General der Infanterie in April 1944, BLUMENTRITT held many important assignments during World War II including tours as Operations Officer of Army Groups in Poland and France in 1939 and 1940, Chief of Staff, Fourth Army during the drive on Moscow in 1940-41, First General Staff Officer in Army General Staff in Russia in 1942, Chief of Staff, Ob West in 1942/44, Acting Commander of XII SS Corps* in 1944/45, Commander in Chief of Twenty-Fifth Army in Holland in March 1945, Acting Commander in Chief of First FS Army in April 1945 and of Blumentritt Army in Verde, Hamburg and Luebeck from 8 April to the end of the war. General BLUMENTRITT finally was taken prisoner in Schleswig-Holstein on 31 May 1945.

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* During this assignment General BLUMENTRITT was given temporary rank as SS Obergruppenfuehrer and General der Waffen-SS.

The Author of Appendix 2

Hermann FOERTSCH, GSC
General der Infanterie
Date of Birth: 4 April 1895
Place of Birth: Drohnow, Westpreussen

After training in the Officer Candidate School, Potsdam, in 1913/14, FOERTSCH served in the field forces throughout World War I. From 1921 to 1925 he received training for the post of assistant chief of staff and in 1926, in the rank of captain, was appointed Press Officer in Berlin.

When war broke out in 1939, FOERTSCH, then a colonel, was Chief of Staff, XXVI Infantry Corps, in position on the western front. In 1941 he was assigned Chief of Staff, XII Infantry Corps in southeastern Europe. Promoted Generalmajor in 1941 and Generalleutnant in 1943, he remained in southeastern Europe until 1944, serving in turn as Chief of Staff of Army Group E and Army Group F. In November 1944 FOERTSCH was promoted General der Infanterie and transferred to the Kurland front as commander of 21st Infantry Division where he later served as Commander in Chief of X Infantry Corps.

Early in 1945 General FOERTSCH assumed command of the First Army on the western front, retaining that position until capitulation took place on 6 May 1945.

The Author of Appendix 3

Rudolf Albert Fedor KOCH-ERPACH
General der Kavallerie
Date of Birth: 9 April 1886
Place of Birth: Munich, Germany

KOCH-ERPACH joined the Army immediately after leaving school in July 1904, entering the 2d Royal Bavarian Ulan Regiment, Ansbach, Bavaria, and in 1906 received his commission as second lieutenant with special royal commendations. After various assignments in cavalry units, training institutions and abroad prior to August 1914, he served throughout World War I successively as special missions staff officer, battalion commander, General Staff officer on staffs at division and army group level, as a member of military missions and as liaison officer. In 1935 KOCH-ERPACH was promoted Generalmajor and assumed command of the 8th Infantry Division. Promoted General-leutnant in 1937 and General der Kavallerie in 1940 he was placed in the Army High Command Officer Reserve in May 1941 after a brief spell as Senior General Commanding XXXV and LX Corps. He was re-called to service in July 1942 as Acting Commander-in-Chief of VIII Infantry Corps and transferred in February 1945 as Commander-in-Chief of LXI Panzer Corps, only to be relieved of this staff and again placed in the Army High Command Officer Reserve in April. One month later he was re-called and assigned command of the First Army.

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The Author of Appendix 4

Edgar ROEHRICHT, GSC
General der Infanterie
Date of Birth: 16 June 1892
Place of Birth: Liebau, Silesia

ROEHRICHT joined the Army in 1915 after studying jurisprudence and philosophy at the Breslau University. He was promoted colonel in January 1939, at which time he was Chief, Operations Division, IV Infantry Corps, stationed in Dresden. In February 1942 he was promoted Generalmajor, in April 1943 Generalleutnant. At this time he was on the eastern front, having been assigned to there in command of the 95th Infantry Division. In May 1944 General ROEHRICHT assumed command of XXI Infantry Corps, in the south sector of the eastern front.

The Author of Appendix 5

Adolf von SCHELL, OSC
Generalleutnant
Date of Birth: 21 August 1893
Place of Birth: Magdeburg, Sachsen-Anhalt

Adolf von SCHELL joined the Infantry as officer candidate in March 1914 and during World War I reached the rank of first lieutenant. After the war he remained in the new 100,000-man Army Germany was allowed to maintain under the Treaty of Versailles, and in 1935 was taken over into the new Wehrmacht, remaining in service until December 1944.

During his service in the Army, von SCHELL was detached for a three-year period of training in the Muenster and Berlin War Colleges as assistant in higher staffs from 1926 to 1929, and also spent a year, 1930/31, as observer in the Infantry School, Fort Benning, United States. From 1936 to 1938 he was Chief of Staff, Army High Command Inspectorate 6 (Panzer Forces), and from 1938 to 1942 Chief of Army High Command Motor Group, into which Inspectorate 8 (Supply Service Forces) had been consolidated. Simultaneously he held the post of State Commissioner for Road Transportation from 1938 to 1942, and that of Chief of the Road Transportation Branch in the Ministry of Transportation in 1940/42. It was during this period that von SCHELL was promoted to general rank, in 1940 to Generalmajor and in 1942 to Generalleutnant. In 1943 came his first spell of service with the field forces during World War II. He was assigned as Commanding General, 23d Panzer Division in Norway and later in France, but in November of the same year was recalled and placed in the Army High Command Officer Reserve Pool and retired on 31 December 1944.

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The Author of Appendix 6

Karl-Theodor Siegfried WESTPHAL
General der Kavallerie, GSC
Date of Birth: 18 March 1902
Place of Birth: Leipzig, Germany

After two years in the Junior Cadet Schools at Wallstadt and Naumburg, WESTPHAL entered the Chief Cadet Center at Berlin Lichterfelde in 1917, staying there for one year. In 1921 he underwent training in the Munich Infantry School and received his commission as second lieutenant on 1 December 1922.

During World War II he held assignments as chief of staff at division and later at corps level on the western front, and was then attached to the Franco-German Armistice Commission in Wiesbaden during 1940/41. In 1941 and 1942 he held the joint posts as chief of staff and operations officer of Africa Panzer Corps in Lybia, and in December 1942, in the rank of colonel, was given command of the 164th Light Africa Division. After a brief spell as Chief of Operations Division, CiC South Italy, he was transferred as Chief of Staff, CiC West, in 1944 retaining that post until captured on 7 May 1945. He was promoted Generalmajor in March 1943, Generalleutnant in April 1944 and General der Kavallerie in February 1945.

The Theoretical Foundations of the Army High Command and Their Effect Upon Its Organization

A Concluding Word to the Total Work on the Army High Command

A. Introduction

The study entitled "Army High Command" (OKH) may easily produce the impression that this agency was divided, lacked unity, and responded inadequately to the demands of the time. The origin and development of the OKH, and the factors which influenced it and the General Staff officers who made up this command have not been sufficiently covered in this study.

It is necessary, therefore, that the fundamental concepts upon which the Army High Command was based and the later developments which influenced it be discussed in this "Concluding Word to the Total Work on the Army High Command" to understand more clearly the internal structure of this command agency. The roots of these ideas, which so greatly affected the mental attitude of the German officer corps, lie in the decades before World War I; for this reason this period is touched upon briefly.

This summary primarily draws upon two sources:

1. The opinions and statements, obtained by interview and from the writings of the former Chief of the German General Staff of the Army, Generaloberst Franz Halder. They relate principally to Part C.

2. The studies attached as Appendices 1-6 were drawn up by Generals

Blumentritt	(Appendix 1)
Foertsch	(Appendix 2)
Koch-Erpach	(Appendix 3)
Roehricht	(Appendix 4)
von Schell	(Appendix 5)
Westphal	(Appendix 6)

These have primarily been assimilated in Part B.

These appendices deal with the subject in so much detail that their essential contents could but be briefly summarized in this introduction, their incorporation in the text being indicated each time. Reference in the text to the incorporation of the opinions of Generaloberst Halder has seemed superfluous as the form and contents of this study as a whole are based on them and have originated under Halder's direct influence.

B. The Period up to World War I

Almost without exception the important military leaders in Germany passed through the school of the German General Staff. The German General Staff, in the form in which the world knows it, was developed in the nineteenth century under Generals von Gneisenau and Scharnhorst, and at the end of the century came into prominence under Chief of General Staff von Moltke. From the very beginning the mental training of the General Staff was based on the philosophical "Book on War" by Carl von Clausewitz, which has influenced the military minds of almost all countries in the world. Clausewitz divests war of its independent existence and places it into its proper relation with its environment; he characterizes war as a weapon of the politician and the statesman, to be used only as a last resort. Clausewitz also introduces the idea of total war, which requires the "release of all the energies of a country"; he analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of defensive and offensive warfare and points out the necessity of a timely recognition of the climax of a war in order that politics may come to the fore again as soon as the military means are exhausted.

The more novel these and other precepts of Clausewitz were, the more effect they created. Moltke filled them with spirit and life, calling war "an art, to which many sciences are subservient"; Moltke gave evidence of his artistic ability and understanding in this field in the wars during the last half of the nineteenth century. His conception of the "art of generalship", his pointed emphasis of the

primacy of politics in all matters of state had an extremely great influence on the German General Staff, which was trained and educated by Moltke's authority. It is no exaggeration when Clausewitz' principles, especially Moltke's interpretation of them, are referred to as the basic concepts of the German General Staff and consequently of the military leaders.

(For greater detail of these fundamental concepts cf. the studies by Generals Blumentritt, Foertsch, Koch-Erpach and Roehricht, Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4).

Unless kept up-to-date and modified according to changing conditions, principles degenerate into hackneyed catchwords or phrases.

A certain such degeneration occurred in the beginning of the twentieth century under Chief of General Staff Count Schlieffen. He took one of Clausewitz' principles, the battle of extermination, and emphasized it with such pointedness and grandiose one-sidedness that this principle assumed the character of a panacea; Count Schlieffen wrote his familiar book "Cannae", not to relegate to the past all the other principles of Clausewitz, but deliberately in self-defense against the untowardness of the political situation of his time, the impending fight against superior forces and the growing lethargy of German foreign politics. (Cf. Appendix 1)

Here already lay the roots of the one-sided military orientation of the German General Staff. The growing recognition that neither skill nor effective measures for the solution of Germany's problems could be expected of the political leaders isolated the soldier, who concentrated

more and more on his own particular sphere. Events that could have brought new military knowledge, such as the American Civil War and the Russo-Japanese War failed to receive proper appreciation; the tactical aspects of the American War of Independence, i.e. the sustained frontal warfare as compared to quick decisive engagements, were neither recognized nor evaluated in their full significance.

With these military leaders, who were excellently trained in all phases of the military sphere, but not at all trained in all fields of strategy -- if this be interpreted as the coordination of political, mental, economic and military forces of a country --, the German Army went into World War I. The theoretical foundations had not been expanded in the period preceding the war but had been limited to purely military matters; by way of compensation this spiritual demesne had been exhausted in its full depths. (Cf. Appendix 2). Thus the German Army entered World War I, commanded by military leaders highly trained in the technical aspects of warfare, but completely ignorant of the strategical aspects, the coordination of the political, psychological, economic and military resources of a country. In the period preceding the war this side of the education of the German military mind had been completely neglected. (Cf. Appendix 2).

The organization of the Supreme Army Command reflected the results of this training; an excellently trained commander corps wielded the military instrument, but had no contact with the demesne of politics. Because of this limited background, the Supreme Army

Command was unable to conceive of the idea or make plans for the possibility of total warfare. The material values were underestimated, the moral ones too strongly accentuated.

World War I, however, became more and more total as it progressed; it required the "release of all energies of the state". A remarkable shortage of strong personalities outside the military sphere caused the economic organization of the country to be turned over to the military more and more. This expansion of the soldier's power, born of an emergency, resulted in an erroneous conception which threatened to shift the foundations of military command: After the war Ludendorff advocated the thesis of the primacy of the military command, that politics had to be subordinated to it and that in a crisis the military command was fitted to assume the over-all leadership over the country. The absurdity of this idea was realized before it had gained deep influence. (Cf. Appendix 6)

C. The Period up to World War II.

During World War I the question of total warfare passed from the stage of theory into that of solid reality. An analysis of this matter and evaluation of relevant experience, however, was not possible: after the Treaty of Versailles only a few persons remained in their old functions, most military men returned to the concerns of day-to-day civilian life. Continuity of all ideas on the political and military level was disrupted; military men could not even broach the question of frontier defense in a future war, let alone that of a total war, because the possibility of conducting a war did not exist at all. Neither political nor military activity was possible at that time, hence any development of tactical and strategical military ideas was limited.

Only from 1935 on, after the declaration of Germany's military sovereignty and at the beginning of rearmament, could the theoretic scope be broadened. But even here there were set limits: the rapid rate of rearmament, dictated and increased from year to year by Hitler, encumbered the supreme military leaders to such an extent that they could scarcely spare the time for theoretical considerations.

The problems of government and Wehrmacht command, of the preparation for a total war became ever more acutely prominent. This problem also took hold of Hitler who tried to solve it in his own fashion, and at the same time to crush the power of the military leaders, whom he hated with all his soul because of their mental attitude. At his bidding

the Reich Defense Council and plenipotentiaries general were created as cautious attempts at doing justice to the situation, but from the beginning were doomed to ineffectuality owing to the lack of organization, the choice of appointees and deliberate collateral arrangement of functions. In the Reich Defense Council, for example, the Wehrmacht was represented solely by the figure of Keitel, who was neutralized every time by his counterplayers and could never assert himself against a Goering.

The General Staff remained untouched by the problems of total warfare; it not only had to carry the work load of the rapid build-up of the Wehrmacht, but it was intentionally restricted by Hitler to its military demesne, barred from even the slightest view into other fields of government, and was prevented from exercising any influence whatsoever on them. The realization that military warfare represents only a small part in the interplay of political, economic, psychological and military forces during a war could not gain ascendancy over Hitler's dictatorial power. During the period of rearmament the spheres were kept strictly separated. Hitler, who overestimated the German potential, retained political control; the control of the national economy was over-organized and it never became an effective force; the propaganda machine by its very nature failed to achieve complete control. In these three sectors of national control the soldier had no say at all. Military control alone was the concern of the General Staff.

From 1935 on the formation of the new German Wehrmacht was undertaken in a rapid and generous manner. Past experience and modern

technical developments combined to produce an armed force that would be equal to all requirements of modern warfare. In no other country in the world was the motor so clearly recognized as a modern combat means and made available to the armed forces as in Germany (cf. Appendix 5); on the other hand it is true that no other country was in the favorable position of having to re-create a new armed force from the beginning after an evaluation of all experience hitherto gathered. Luftwaffe and panzer divisions were the external signs of the fact that the German military command was deeply imbued with the idea of motorised warfare. The campaigns against Poland and France in World War II have proved these ways of thinking to have been correct.

The conception of motorized warfare could not be carried to its ultimate conclusion, either on the theoretical level or from a practical point of view. It was typical of the German General Staff's way of thinking to skip not only one but several links in the chain of theoretical deductions. But even if the theoretical conclusions were drawn and the nature of motorized warfare was grasped theoretically in all its manifestations, these theories could not be practically evaluated because of the limitation of the armament basis. Luftwaffe and panzer force were pressed into the narrow scope of German armament capacity, which had only room for building up these modern arms, while all farther-reaching demands could not have been met.

During this rearmament period another problem, the idea of a joint control of Army, Navy and Luftwaffe and the demand for a Wehrmacht High Command (OKW), gained great prominence. This demand developed into a

serious conflict between Hitler and the tradition-bound forces of the German General Staff on the one hand and within the German General Staff on the other; this controversy was a decided hindrance to the military command during World War II.

There was only one organization that embodied experience, tradition, knowledge, and ability in the military field: the Army General Staff. The Army General Staff, however, was anathema to Hitler because of its attitude; it could not be allowed to gain control of the new Wehrmacht and thus have this essential element of the state under its influence. The Army General Staff incurred Hitler's specific mistrust and even his hate, not only because the Dictator was inimically disposed to all superior technical knowledge, but particularly because he regarded the General Staff as the incarnation of the soldier's ethos, which was alien to his nature. To create an obedient OKW, Hitler had to assure himself of the assistance of a few outsiders. These outsiders who were selected mirrored Hitler's way of thinking; he believed that he could rely only on individuals who were not too firmly bound to the tradition of the General Staff and who went along with him in the field of improvisation, of rushing headlong, disregarding fundamental military concepts. The Army General Staff regarded the task of organizing the OKW as its own prerogative, and from its own point of view it was fully right in doing so; the men who were entrusted with establishing the OKW were not the bearers of its spirit and its philosophy. This fundamental antagonism toward those individuals forming the new organization led deliberately, and in part unconsciously, to the Army General Staff's

reputation of the OKW.

Frequent minor disagreements and irritations served to magnify this fundamental antipathy; the General Staff refused to be neutralized and only with reluctance subordinated itself to a new command agency whose superiority they did not recognize. The leading personalities in the General Staff of the Army were convinced that the new OKW simply could not fulfill its task, since the best minds were to be found only in the reservoir of the General Staff, and they were not called upon for this new office because Hitler detested their ties to the detested General Staff spirit.

Thus, there arose from the beginning an antagonism between these two command agencies, into which both sides maneuvered themselves ever more deeply, resistance on one side producing equal resistance on the other.

Another root of this battle lay in the political plain. It was inevitable that the persons in the OKW came more or less under the personal influence of Hitler, absorbed the ideas of this social revolutionary par excellence, and became subservient to him in the political sphere as well as in all others. It was, however, precisely these ideas, to which all individuals in Hitler's surroundings had to bow, that were repudiated by the General Staff; hence, this was another surface of friction.

The results of this persistent opposition were far-reaching: the OKW was prevented from performing its task, which all sides had recognized as necessary; its task was too great compared with the means

which were at its disposal for the execution of this task. A unified command was rendered impossible by this double-tracked procedure. As its influence was limited to the purely military field, the OKW was never in a position to carry on a total war. Moreover, as a result of the exclusion of the General Staff there were no personalities available to whom a Reich Marshal Goering as Luftwaffe Commander in Chief or a Grand Admiral Raeder as Navy Commander in Chief would have bowed. On the contrary, these two branches of the Wehrmacht exploited the weakness of the OKW to gain an independence which destroyed all attempts at unification.

One cannot help pointing out the great tragedy that lay in this conflict: the need for a unified control of the Wehrmacht was recognized by all persons involved; under politically favorable conditions a Wehrmacht was created which was more modern in spirit and in equipment than all the armed forces of the neighbors and which needed some such central control; a reservoir of personnel was available who were capable of solving this task; and opposition and lack of cooperation on all sides prevented this command from becoming the effective force it should have been.

Once again Hitler's influence in this conflict must be brought out. It would undoubtedly have been possible to Hitler to lift the Army General Staff to a higher level and entrust it with the central control of the Wehrmacht; his own impetuous ideas he could have brought to bear by taking in a number of his special confidants, who would not have disturbed the unity of control but would have been absorbed by

this body. Hitler did not choose this simple way, because he could not overcome his infinite antipathy to the General Staff and regarded the General Staff as nothing but a hindrance to his plans. On the contrary: he rejoiced at the progressing battle and supported it secretly and publicly, because it fitted his destructive principles to play all forces against one another at any time.

Thus the Wehrmacht went into World War II with an operations staff that was built on antagonism, lacked control over its branches (Army, Navy and Luftwaffe), and it had no influence whatever on politics. It was therefore incapable of performing its mission.

On the other side was the OKH with the Army General Staff, a reservoir of best military leaders, doomed to impotence, viewed with utmost distrust by the national leader, and in the course of the war it degenerated to the status of a substaff for the control of the Eastern front. A more extravagant waste of highly qualified manpower was hardly conceivable.

The results of this conflict are more perceptive now than they were at that time.

The fact that the effects of this battle between OKW and OKH prevented the unity of control of the Wehrmacht during World War II shows with unmistakable clearness that this battle was a serious mistake. The question arises whether this battle could or could not have been avoided.

If a compromise between the contrary views had been reached, if the Army General Staff, disregarding all its scruples, had taken a deliberate

part in the control of the Wehrmacht -- even in this case the ultimate result would have been the same. Hitler would not have overcome his infinite distrust in this case either. The divergence of the attitudes on both sides -- of the revolutionary Hitler and the traditional General Staff -- was so great that it could never have been bridged by a temporary compromise. The purely technical control of the Wehrmacht as a means of combat would perhaps have been facilitated for a brief period, but the rift would have reopened very soon. Goering, who in all probability would have been the central figure of such an artificial creation, could only have aggravated the difficulties.

The battle of minds could not have been avoided, nor could it have been deferred. In the last analysis it is seen to be a battle of fundamental views between Hitler and the military leaders rather than a mere contention over the distribution of responsibilities. That this battle had to be fought precisely in the course of World War II is a particular tragedy, a special chapter in the history of this period, which abounds so very much in tragic moments. A decisive power source, the central control, remained closed to the Wehrmacht; it might have given World War II a different course.

/s/ von Natzmer

MS # P-041kk

Guenther Blumentritt
General der Infanterie

26 August 1948

The Basic Concepts of the Original OKH

Translator: P. L. Muschamp

Appendix 1

The Original Organization of the OKH

I. Basic Concepts

a. Clausewitz: The incorporation of war as a function of state, war as a political act, last resort.

Appreciation

"Clausewitz is a razor in the hands of a child." During the semester of 1932/33, after we had attended twelve lectures on Clausewitz given by Professor Dr. Elze as part of the "Reinhard" course at the First Army Group Headquarters and the University of Berlin, an astute member passed the above judgment.

The Prussian, the German, the General, von Clausewitz was and remained a little known person. In his day only very few understood him; the masses were far too uneducated to read him, let alone understand him. His day was a time of spiritual upheaval. The great German writers of the 18th century, the "Weimar circle", the penetrating ideologies of the French Revolution, the mighty political and military revolutions at the turn of the century, had also brought about a spiritual revolution.

The rationalism of the 18th century, the declining era of Frederic the Great, made way for a revolutionary idealism. The sequence to each spiritual revolution is fanaticism, an absolute faith in the universality of the new set of ideas.

If the masses remained as yet unaffected, they too, at the time of

Appendix 1

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If the masses remained as yet unaffected, they too, at the time of

the "wars of liberation", stood on the threshold of a closed door demanding entrance to the temple of learning and membership in the "state".

The upper middle class, the intelligentsia, had already taken this forward step in the days of Clausewitz and demanded equal rights with the forces of old established nobility. The cultural impulse was tremendous. Indicative are the many famous names of philosophers, poets, statesmen, economists, theologists and - soldiers. The new liberalism had come into being, with its high regard for spiritual values, for philosophy, and for humanistic trends of thought.

But only a thin upper-crust could break new trails, not the great mass of semi-illiterates. Their time had not come yet.

The officers' corps of those days was also in the throes of change. The great and solitary philosopher of Sanssouci, Frederic the Great, sought his friends among French philosophers. In his country he found few kindred spirits. Toward the strong new Germanic spirit which was already developing this solitary thinker remained skeptical. His general and officers were men of virile parts, "characters," realists, brave soldiers of the old school - but no intellectual heroes. If the king wanted intellectual conversation in a situation where only officers were around he sent not for Ziethen or Seydlitz but for Winterfeld and Schwerin.

The great bulk of the officers' corps consisted of staunch Tellheims*

* A character in MINNA VON BARNHELM, a theater play by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. Apparently Blumentritt considers Tellheim typical of the courageous and intelligent but unsophisticated military officer of those days, excellent as a soldier and likable for his human qualities but sadly lacking in higher learning and in the social graces, perhaps even a little uncouth.

who were unsuited for table-talk at Sanssouci.

Goethe's time, half a century later, was marked by the French revolution. As a champion of humanistic harmony, as the son of an imperial councillor, as minister and friend of a duke and as an aesthete, Goethe was an enemy of a plebeian revolution from below; but he could not escape the spirit of revolution.

Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, Clausewitz and others were, however, revolutionaries. They were "political" officers and generals.

Never have officers played such an important part in Prussian state life as during the lifetime of General Clausewitz. This small circle was liberal, revolutionary, and effective. These men fought for their ideas at home, abroad, and in their king's own court. They stood by their principles, had to flee, were often in danger, but they stood fast and inexhorable. After the amnesty following the wars of liberation they were brushed aside as troublesome fighters.

Goethe got along very well with these officers, and it was they who brought the Olympian* to declare that conversation with educated officers was a source of particular satisfaction. Quite an admission for Goethe.

Clausewitz

We can now surmise what Clausewitz was and wanted:

a. Clausewitz was the child of a great revolutionary period.

b. Consequently he was a philosopher, for philosophy belonged to the foundations of humanistic culture.

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* As the giant of German literature, Goethe is often called the "Olympian"

c. He was psychologist, for, along with Goethe, he realized that the nature of man did not permit rational weighing and measuring, but rather that the imponderables ruled supreme.

d. He was a politician, for the leading military thinkers were politicians in those days, active, often passionate ones.

e. He was a patriot, and as a soldier deeply impressed by the collapse of Prussia. Clausewitz was capable of intellectual hatred and his whole book on war is fanatic and totalitarian. (Read his chapter on the nature of battle. You will find no humanitarian considerations, only a "you or I".)

f. He had a disciplined mind, not inclined, in spite of his fiery spirit, to let himself be carried away by any violent emotion. Though his passions might be hot, his thinking was ice-cold.

Such is the foundation upon which the military mind of this pure war theorist and philosopher was developed. His philosophic ideas, however, were and are of little interest to the officers' corps as a whole, whose education and training was aimed toward a smart soldierly bearing and courage in battle.

With this officers' corps we won the victories of 1864, 1866, 1870/71, 1914/18 and 1939/45, even though we lost the last two wars. Surely there must have been something imposing about this limited, strict, practical education. The officers of these victories had for the most part no interest in politics, indeed, they were inclined to reject, even to despise politics. A very excellent and practical instrument of war was our brave,

efficient, and sacrificing officers' corps!

But a Clausewitz most of them could not understand. Precisely because they had been trained as they were, Clausewitz remained obscure to them. It was suspected that Clausewitz really was somebody, and because they heard that he was widely read and commented on by learned men, especially abroad, they, too, wanted to show that they understood their fellow soldier Clausewitz. Having collected a suitable set of catch-words and phrases from his writings they would cite: "As Clausewitz so very appropriately says ....."

But they had not understood what he meant. As practical officers devoted to their daily duties it was not to be expected that they would spend evenings reading an 800 page book about war, written in an archaic style and containing long involved sentences — so different from their drill manual, and unbroken by Ludendorff-style sentences such as "I am a soldier. My life was devoted to duty. War is necessary." — plus his incomprehensible, tiring psychology and philosophy, and all his theorizing. That was no reading for the very busy average officers. After struggling with some twenty pages the book was laid aside as too obscure and with the consoling thought that it was in any case obsolete and no longer valid.

So it happened that the professional soldier Clausewitz was not studied by regular officers, but by retired officers, professors and other learned scholars. True, he was also studied by professional soldiers, but unfortunately abroad, chiefly in Russia (to this day),

in France, in the U.S.A., in England, Japan, Spain, and Italy. Translated into all languages this phenomenal work captured the very special interest of the leading minds in the officers' corps abroad. As a result, and regrettably so, Clausewitz was much better understood abroad than by his own people. In Germany we find Clausewitz remained in the university libraries.

Everything concerned with tactics, armament, organization, and so forth, in Clausewitz' book is of course now quite obsolete and can only be of interest for historical studies on these subjects. Of continuing interest are precisely those basic philosophical and psychological concepts apparently so difficult to digest.

Clausewitz' source material begins with the historical war records of Frederic the Great, but more particularly, of course, with the developments of his own time: the wars of Napoleon and the wars of liberation. For Clausewitz these wars were modern to a high degree. Consequently his teachings were based on these experiences. Today, of course, about 75% of his operational studies, about 90% of his tactical work, and all he wrote concerning armament and organization is obsolete. As to strategy, the book still contains a few useful principles worthy of present consideration. Of enduring and even current value are the psycho-philosophical portions which we unfortunately neglected to study.

The Essential

The nature of war.

Without philosophical considerations the nature of war cannot be

discussed at all.. It is a problem and topic of interest not only to professional soldiers but to all people.

It is a controversy of ideologies, the interpretation of "God", and the nature, purpose, and meaning of human life. It is a conflict of reason and intellect. Why is war allegedly necessary? Is it really God's will to destroy human, spiritual, and material values? Is this destruction, misery, and distress without purpose? Not only man's conscience and emotions, but also his intellect rebel against it all.

Yet we still have wars and have had wars as long as mankind itself has existed. There has always been violence. Great soldiers, politicians, and philosophers have made their opinions on war widely known. There is conflict everywhere, both visible and invisible, upon our small and insignificant planet. What a cruel struggle in the animal world, in the seas, all against all, survival of the fittest; what silent conflict in the plant world, even geological strife which goes unnoticed for thousands of years!

Is it not a presumption on the part of mere man, from the philosophical point of view, if he considers himself so superior and important as to be outside of nature's laws and assumes that the apparently cruel law of "equilibrium through violence" should not apply to him? If so, can God then, who allows all this, be so omniscient and omnipotent. Indeed, if we accept the simple concept of God as taught by the Church for easier understanding, then it is God Himself Who "sends" war.

So the problem of war must be viewed from all sides, objectively, exploring the pros and cons. Any other course would be narrow-minded.

Agreement is hardly to be expected, but that is no reason for making enemies of those holding different opinions.

Clausewitz as a soldier and philosopher arrives at the conclusion that war is inevitable as soon as the rules of politics no longer are effective and the media of diplomacy can no longer find a solution.

Clearly and unequivocally he establishes the principle that politics alone is the controlling element and must remain so even in wartime. So that even if war is ultima ratio regum*, the power available to the politician, the extension of politics — an extension with other, military means — the logical conclusion follows that politics should not be interrupted or terminated by war, but must remain in control.

Bismarck acted in conformance with Clausewitz' ideas, although he is scarcely likely to have read Clausewitz. Bismarck's politics were such before, during and after the wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870/71 that things were made easy for the soldier. He believed in war on a single front and numerical superiority. He prevented coalitions, allayed impending interventions by others, used foresight in planning future relations with former enemies. Bismarck had frequent conflicts with the regular army careerists, fights with the king and his military advisors and even with the demigods of the General Staff, but not with Moltke personally.

Clausewitz would have rejoiced at the relationship between politics and war during Bismarck's time.

World War I, from the German point of view was a soldier's war and

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* The last argument of kings

neither before 1914 nor during 1914/18 was it controlled by politics. Ludendorff was obliged to mingle with affairs that were not his concern.

In England and France, on the other hand, very strong politics were controlling. In 1914/18 Clausewitz would have wept over his Germans, rejoiced at the politics of the enemy.

German politics during 1939/45 quite similarly ceased all at once to exercise control and the bloody work was left up to the soldier, even more so than 1914/18. Clausewitz would have wept very much.

2. War is an act of force, a fight between two men multiplied many times. Power, mind, will, cunning have only one aim, that of absolute victory, of destroying the enemy, that is, making him completely defenseless (in other words, it is not the aim necessarily to kill him).

To this end an absolute straining of all physical and mental energies is necessary.

According to Clausewitz warfare is thus visualized as being "total".

If one of the two adversaries or even both of them would become lax or tired or "considerate", it would no longer be a fight, a war.

I believe that Clausewitz was the first champion of total warfare, which he could not know at his time. The intensity, the fanaticism of modern total warfare is fully Clausewitz.

3. To achieve this total warfare he sought the destruction of the enemy's army, the instrument of the enemy's politics. From this the logical step was the tactical "battle of extermination".

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Appendix 1

One can understand this development by comparing the type of operations during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with those developed by Napoleon -- two epochs which are so familiar that explanations are unnecessary.

The first epoch had small, highly vulnerable, compressed mercenary armies spread out over large areas. The art of warfare was not the heavy, thick fighting, but a skillful, evasive maneuvering through almost geometrically calculated marches and movements around the enemy. In this manner one forced each other to evade, one maneuvered onself out of the country and was glad if one succeeded in doing so without a battle.

The second epoch brought the mass armies, who were imbued with the revolutionary spirit and the ruthlessness which it created. It was an all embracing concept of a new free spirit and lack of restraint -- in a word, the revolutionary tempo of ideological campaigns. Napoleon sought the battle passionately and rejoiced when he had finally cornered the enemy.

Clausewitz derived his doctrines from Napoleon and the German Wars of Liberation, in other words, from two wars that from the beginning were imbued with the nationalistic spirit. Hence we already see the approach of total warfare, of war of the masses. War become the destiny of the entire nation. Clausewitz only drew the conclusions.

Up to this point "good old" Clausewitz was still fairly intelligible to many an officer. The battle of extermination, was a conclusion approved by the average officer.

Appendix 1

Clausewitz said that to destroy the enemy was the objective of any operation. This idea we shall carry to its logical conclusion.

And thus arose after Clausewitz the era of the idea of absolute extermination, and military men were instructed to perfection along this line. We shall come to it later in the following sections of this study.

4. One further point brought out by Clausewitz was the need to recognize the turning point or apex of a war. This is of particular concern to the German nation.

Clausewitz masterly described the nature of the manpower and economic resources and the limits which are consequently set to the political and military aspirations of a country.

His liberal education which included the philosophy of the ancient Greeks taught him the principle of moderation and balance in all things. He knew the danger of going too far. He compared warfare to the trajectory of a projectile — first the powerful impetus and driving force of the shell as it leaves the muzzle and soars to an apex at which time the driving force has dissipated and the shell falls rapidly to the ground.

Here the philosopher and psychologist, the thinker and calculator draws his cool, general-staff-like conclusions.

In World War I the apex was in 1918.

In World War II it was in 1943.

Politically these two wars had already been lost, but from the military point of view 1918 and 1943 were the apices.

Thus, we have not paid due attention to these pages in the Book on War.

5. But Clausewitz gave us still more. He analyzed completely the use of the attack, defense, delaying fight, retreat, cunning and feint; furthermore he recognized the high value of the ability to wait, of evasion, of the surprise attack, the "flashing sword of retaliation", which catches the overconfident enemy completely unaware.

These chapters, too, were apparently followed during World War I only by Hindenburg and Ludendorff during 1914 and 1915 in the East.

On the whole the two world wars were a neglect of the doctrines of Clausewitz.

We all had turned toward a grandiose, in itself imposing, one-sidedness and could see only one chapter of Clausewitz', namely the stubborn battle of extermination. The free mind, the art of warfare, had been ignored.

6. Also Clausewitz taught that a war may also be waged and terminated by the capture of the enemy capital, by the cutting of communications, by operations deep in the rear, by carrying the war to the civilian population, and so forth. He was very manifold in his means.

Objective Criticism

Clausewitz tried to write his book from an objective point of view. But he always returned to his own time.

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Appendix 1

There is no doubt that the true Clausewitz was more attentively studied abroad than in our own country. There can also be no doubt that politically and militarily we have not conformed our actions to the doctrines of Clausewitz while our enemies have done so. There can be no doubt that prominent names in prefaces and dedications to the Book on War have pointed out that the German officer was educated in conformance with Clausewitz' principles, that the German General Staff was so trained. But one who reads these prefaces will realize that these men betray the fact by the manner in which they act as champions of Clausewitz that they themselves have not understood him at all. There can, however, be no doubt either that Clausewitz naturally assumed ideal conditions, which have not existed in Germany in recent years.

(1) Frederick the Great and Napoleon I were their own statesman and generals. Harmony was insured. It is not possible in our time. In both world wars we lacked the politician Frederick and the politician Napoleon. The soldier was left to his own devices.

(2) Germany lay in the heart of Europe and was surrounded by great powers that from 1871 on did not view her rapid rise with friendly eyes. To bide one's time to plan a strategic defense with a "flashing sword of retaliation" at the proper time is doomed to failure from the beginning because of demands of space and time. German offensive thinking which ruled the army from the Supreme Command down to the platoon, squad, this grandiose one-sidedness was the result of the German geographical position.

Germany could only maintain itself militarily by assuming the offensive. It had to attack quickly and decisively, and could not afford a long drawn-out war.

(3) Our enemies lay on the outside. Strategically they could stage their troops around the Fortress Germany for a period of several years, complete the encirclement and then attack in mutual cooperation. They could wait until the German force had overextended itself and then, fully prepared, swing the "flashing sword of retaliation".

(4) We had to hurry for we could not live long in the fortress without supplies. Our enemies had time; the whole world brought the vital supplies from outside while Germany was unable to cut them off decisively.

(5) We frequently had to overextend ourselves, because of economic reasons we needed further space and resources to carry us through the war. Our enemies, as besiegers, constricted this space from outside after each offensive.

Since Clausewitz did not yet know an air force, constriction of each space by the air force will not be considered at this time.

Conclusions

Clausewitz is not outdated in those chapters that deal with philosophy, psychology, character, imponderables, mind, and alternating effects between politics and warfare. In all other fields his book naturally is no longer true.

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Appendix 1

Unfortunately we have studied Clausewitz too little, while our enemies have done so too carefully.

We must allow, however, that often important principles could not be applied in our situation while our enemies were in a position to do so.

General von Clausewitz' basic political, philosophical, and psychological ideas, however, have been proved to be more valid today than ever.

The conception of war being total was prophetic.

The recognition that warfare is largely influenced by psychological, immeasurable influences is correct. Napoleon said that war is 100 per cent psychology. This is greatly exaggerated, but 50 per cent of it is true.

The picture of the ideal general is still the goal of all striving, military men. That politics must maintain the upper hand and keep political control firmly in their grasp is more true today than ever.

b. Schlieffen: Extermination idea. Cannae, Leuthen.

The Prussian General Staff, which the world hates, fears, acknowledges and — admires as the German General Staff, was formed by Moltke I. Before it was only a modest adjunct to the war ministry.

Moltke I gradually separated it from the war ministry during the wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870/71. Moltke himself was unknown, and only after the three victorious wars was he placed on the same level with the two strong figures Bismarck and Roon.

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Appendix 1

The General Staff always had the reputation of a somewhat mysterious art, respected, even admired, but not always loved.

Psychologically this is particularly interesting.

Every General Staff officer had been specifically selected. This fact alone had to place him apart from the average less intelligent officer. The General Staff officer represented the intelligentsia in all countries and so was placed in a certain envied or not envied contrast to the unsophisticated, honest line man in all armies. This we find in all armies. In addition there was a special uniform, a strong General Staff Corps esprit de corps; there was quicker promotion, greater chance for advancement to high staff jobs. One suspected that every General Staff in the world worked "quite secretly", and mysteriously. Civilians, depending upon their ideology, regarded these General Staffs with admiration and awe or with mistrust and malice. Everything that is secret provokes the masses and everything that has esprit de corps is disliked. People do not like the unusual.

But only through psychology and philosophy can one get to the bottom of these imponderables.

The General Staff became ever more indispensable then before after the development of new modern weapons, methods of transportation and when armies numbered millions of men.

But it also became ever more specialized, at the expense of the humanistic general education which Clausewitz, Gneisenau, Scharnhorst advocated.

The curriculum more and more emphasized tactical operations. Every thing else was secondary to tactics. The workload and the working speed increased more and more. A liberal education gave way to specialized technical knowledge. Moltke still had time for his other interests - geography, history, languages, mathematics. He was fond of music, painted, wrote novelettes, was a philosopher, and was content to retire from the service as a major. This was Moltke, who like many of the officer corps of his time often had many secondary interests outside of their duties.

But the quick evolution of science and technology produced everywhere, including the military profession - that is in the General Staff - the highly qualified specialist.

The exponent of this modern General Staff was the great Schlieffen. Like Ludendorff he was strictly military, more highly trained than Moltke I, and for that reason much more one-sided. The specialist was very highly thought of, but as an all-round educated man in the sense of Goethe, Gneisenau, Clausewitz, Moltke he was lacking.

This grandiose one-sidedness of the General Staff machine achieved admirable things as far as work, organization, improvasation were concerned, but the general spirit was no longer that of past times. It was the same process that took place in all other occupations, where one became the victim of the material, mechanical, nerve-racking machine age.

A brilliant mind triumphs over personality. At times it is wise to be silent. Gneisenau and Scharnhorst were outspoken and exerted themselves.

The highly venerated Moltke however could be silent when opposed by superiors. He was no fighter in this respect. Count Schlieffen also recognized William II's shortcomings in the military field, but even he was acquiescent, accepted his orders, and later made sarcastic remarks.

The colossal figure of Hindenburg, too, was silent in 1918 when his inconvenient chief Ludendorff was dropped, and he was silent when his emperor searching for a hold directed his eyes upon him in the dramatical sessions before 11 November 1918.

Von Seeckt, a great soldier, was silent whenever it was unsafe or unpractical to speak up and to oppose, and the most recent period of our drama shows without names having to be mentioned how very often soldiers have been silent when a Gneisenau, a Scharnhorst, a Bluecher, a Baron Vom Stein would have fought.

It is quite understandable that Schlieffen worked out the pure extermination idea, the Cannae, the Leuthen, to the highest power.

He had to do so, because he no longer had a Bismarck as controlling help, and a two front war seemed absolutely certain.

The only remaining mode of defense was the quick, destructive attack. If, however, this failed, then the Fortress Germany would be in a very bad position.

Recognitions

Our General Staff, to which we felt it a great honor to belong, was in an even more vulnerable and dangerous position than the officer corps.

Moltke I and more so the great Schlieffen made the General Staff into what it was. Diligence, fanaticism for work, organizing talent for organization, specialization, conception of duty were its strong points. Grandiose one-sidedness, depreciation of humanistic general education were its weaknesses.

The idea developed since 1871 that the end justifies the means has unfortunately caused a moral degeneration in all aspects of life.

The more intelligent a man is, the shrewder he is, therefore cleverer and more careful; the more simple, the more open and unbiased.

Even today among our people we recognize this truth.

c. The idea of total warfare, which had not been grasped in its full significance.

Between 1919 and 1939 one did not like to hear the total war spoken of for several reasons, but now we know that modern warfare is not only total but "totalissimus".

Total warfare is something barbarous, original. We feel ourselves taken back to the primitive ages. No one conceived that the hoped-for progressive evolution of mankind would be followed in its wake by a warfare still more total and more comprehensive.

Farsighted men envisage with apprehension a possible future war as a war of absolute destruction, of absolute totality, not only in a technical-chemical respect but also in a moral, spiritual, philosophical one - a war without law.

Appendix 1

Before 1914 either Ballin or Walther Rathenau had suggested to the Emperor or prominent ministers and soldiers not only to prepare the military mobilization to the last detail for a future war but also the economic one, but this idea seemed so novel at the time that it was ignored.

These two men, however, were men of world, large businessmen, who understood the economic nature of modern politics, and the totality of modern warfare.

Modern warfare with its general conscription, with its millions of men, with the air force, which more and more became the dominating form of war, this modern war of coalitions, of technology and science, of chemistry and physics, the war of the engineer and the laboratory, the war of "either - or", of "you or I" -- this war must be total. Actually it involves a nation's entire population, makes no difference between soldier and civilian, between men, women and children.

Who still discriminates today between "important" and "unimportant" for warfare ? Everything is important for warfare, hence everything must be combated. The spirit also must be made dead, the will paralyzed. Propaganda is the fourth branch of the armed forces, its effect is immense.

What means of warfare are not permitted in practice today? The large-scale bombing of residential sections was nowhere anticipated. Who envisioned atomic bombs ? And has the use of them been outlawed ? But what do written agreements means in a fight of nations for existence in total warfare ?

Hence it can be said briefly:

The twentieth century brought the total war, any war in the future would make World Wars I and II seems child's play. The old, gallant war of a past age has been buried in 1914/15.

The development in 1916 of the steel helmet marked the era of a new war of technology, of material, of totality and even a new form of bravery.

From 1916 until today warfare has become and will continue to do so, more total and absolute.

I see no possibility to bring about a change with human, that is with legal means. Laws do not change the ways of evolution unless men change -- which for the time being can hardly be expected.

II. Evolutionary Foundations.

A. Before the Beginning of Rearmament.

1. Influence of World War I.

Outside of the rapid development of the technical means of warfare (armament, communications, motorization of the entire civil life, etc.) we also went into World War I with improved morale and notably improved tactical developments. A long time previously there were thoughtful soldiers who warned, others who doubted, whether these developments woul still correspond to the progress of technology. Only after 1916 did

we realize that the war had assumed a new face and a new spirit, technology, industrialization began to march ahead and only hesitantly did we follow. But let us not linger over the developments, much as could be said of them. The essential thing is the philosophical considerations. Our operations in 1914 in the East and the West were based on the tested school of movement, of the tactical meeting engagement from the marching column. We were much quicker than our quickest enemies. In addition, envelopment was attempted. This meant sweeping and marching, marching, marching, Results were excellent, but our strength was overtaxed. Large areas had to be covered quickly. But only men and horses were available, whose capacities were limited. With the old methods of the mounted infantry and cavalry division we tried to overcome and master strategically the modern large spaces. Napoleon I's operations in 1805, 1806 and especially in 1809 and 1812 were as imposing as they were sweeping, and although the motor was already being widely used in civil life, our methods had not changed from his time. There were a few motorized units on the enveloping wings both on our side and on the Allied side, but no divisions yet. It was too soon, but in 1914 there was already the possibility of motorizing a few units to employ them on the enveloping wings. Although the value of the airplane was soon recognized, it had not been developed in 1914.

The capabilities of the tank were recognized as a possibility long before 1914 in Germany, also in Austria, but the ideas had not been accepted by the authorities.

During World War I technology including the motor on the ground and

in the air developed more and more. If Germany did not take a more aggressive part in the development of mechanized warfare and the development of the air force, it was only because of a tendency toward conservatism and the lack of materiel. By the end of the war mechanization of war on the ground and in the air had developed considerably, much more on the side of the Entente than on ours, which is quite understandable.

When Marshal Foch was asked shortly after 1918 what he imagined the war of the future to be like, he answered, "The next war begins at that point of development where the World War 1918 left off." He forgot to say that it depended on the length of the interval between the wars.

It was clear for the thinking military man when the guns were silent in November 1918 that:

a. Technology and materiel would become more and more important.

b. Motorized warfare had proven highly successful; only through it was there hope of avoiding a stabilized front and of being able to use tactics of free movement again with new more effective means.

c. The air force would gain in importance; this was obvious by 1918.

d. The tank would be a decisive influence in the future.

After 1918 the problem was: "How and with what means does the art

of warfare again receive life and spirit, in other words, opportunity for strategic and tactical development?"

Mechanized warfare was already visualized but it took a long time before the concept was recognized and put into practical execution.

2. Von Seeckt, Reichswehr, Defense Idea Conditioned by the Period.

After World War I the world seriously believed in a world peace, disarmament, and pacifism. Germany was disarmed. Her army consisted of one hundred thousand men of the Reichswehr with old weapons, without heavy artillery, without tanks, without airplanes, without armament factories, without conscription, in other words without reserves — all this was disarmament. France, however, did not disarm, and the Eastern countries and the Balkans increased their armaments, unless they had belonged to the Central Powers. The Red Army was only in the process of establishment, while Great Britain and the United States disarmed to a large extent. War was off.

Generaloberst von Seeckt saw his task as maintaining these one hundred thousand men and their spirit as the heritage of the old Army. He wished to keep these one hundred thousand out of the political party workings as a loyal instrument of the State, the Republic and the Constitution. Outside of that it was only possible to care for the spirit and maintain the tradition. The high number of General Staff officers in the Reichswehr, their staffs and troops were to nourish particularly this spirit.

The first necessity in view of the domestic conditions was

to solidify the professional army.

The next step was to analyze why the war had been lost, what experience it yielded and very, cautiously, how everything would continue to develop. One watched the other countries that had no limits for their armaments, followed their free literature.

In France, the military country par excellence, not much could be recognized. Everything remained as it was in 1918. Security was uppermost, the Maginot Line built, alliances concluded, and the defensive set-up organized tactically. Defense was everything and with French logic this system of safety first was expanded and developed.

Russia offered more. As a revolutionary country, unhampered by tradition, it energetically turned toward technology, materiel, toward tanks and planes.

Great Britain's geographic situation always permitted great deviations. Here Fuller and Lidell Hart fought for the idea of movement, for tanks and mechanization.

Slowly but surely one old cavalry unit after another was mechanized. In the United States this process went quicker; Japan remained old. Military literature theoretically fought for all these problems. It was recognized that the air force had a future, and again it was realized how the civil air service had increased all over the world.

We also visualized the tank in a new form; but as yet it was not clear whether as an accompanying weapon and battering ram of the infantry as in 1916-18 or as a separate unit, a mechanized cavalry.

Generaloberst von Seeckt believed in the highly qualified, mobile, but small professional army. This will be discussed later.

The situation of Germany being what it was from 1919 to 1932 the one hundred thousand men in the Reichswehr had practically no meaning as the weapon of a foreign policy.

3. Fusion of the Idea of the Mass Army with Infantry Characteristics.

The mass army originated from the old idea of general conscription as a genuinely democratic arrangement. The ideal was that every able-bodied man during a war had to render personal military service.

In more recent times the French Revolution revived the idea of the mass army. Napoleon I became its exponent and (for other reasons also) defeated the old professional armies of Europe with this national army until these also adopted general conscription. Naturally other factors also played a considerable role, those not based on organization but on a spiritual and moral revolution. The mass army permitted and demanded quite different control principles than the small professional army. The army of Napoleon I, when distributed throughout Europe, had to be controlled according to new ideas involving larger spaces than the armies of the European countries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The effectiveness of the arms was approximately the same,

but the movement and supply of the mass armies was quite different. The formation of strategic ideas had to become more expansive, more usurpatory.

The preciousness of the professional army vanished, now masses could again be committed and replaced. Hence, the feared battle with its risk could now be sought, and the extermination strategy was the natural result.

The military operation became dependent on the organization. The purely strategic basic plan was dependent on the political situation.

The plan of an operation in itself was simplified, since a lesser number of possibilities remained. On the other hand, the concern for organizational movement and logistics became more prominent.

The controlling element was more and more obliged to adapt itself to concept of mass armies and the organizational pattern of the OKH was of an apparatus for the control and especially for the organization of masses.

During World War I mass armies fought against one another. Even Great Britain in its insular position was obliged to introduce general conscription in spite of themselves from 1915-16 one.

Millions of troops were jammed together opposing each other. No opportunity was left for free bold maneuvering of small armies in large areas. The attack was started as an operating phalanx with a square battalion. The balance of power allowed no party to gain supremacy, and the result was the defense, the digging in, the position warfare

with stable fronts. Any attempt at breaking this stabilized front by force (massed artillery, tanks, gas) did not lead to success or at any rate there was no longer any opportunity for free movement.

World War I became suffocated by this mass of men and materiel, bogged down in a trench war. Thus, after both sides had suffered immense losses, the morale had also suffocated -- there were no more generals, because there could be none; the general had to turn strategic and tactical organizer. The "coup d'oeil" was no more.

In 1918 military men were concerned about this development and searched for a remedy for this evil. From 1919 to 1939 the literature of the military world endeavored to find new ways. A mass army or a small, highly qualified professional army? Not only did von Seeckt concern himself with this question after his discharge, but naturally other military men in Germany and abroad were interested.

The motor offered to give new, undreamed-of chances to the old traditions of strategic mobility. Hitler lacking the old traditions immediately saw clearly the value of the motor, but the others failed to do so.

4. The Initial Influence of the Motor on the Formation of Strategic Ideas.

The motor had no influence on strategic planning from 1914 to 1918. From 1919 to 1939 there was the interval of theory and practical experiments. The issues of the old and new tendencies were debated and

written about in all countries.

In general the older men were inclined to reduce the forms of warfare as conservatively as possible to the time-honored views of the past. The military youth, on the other hand, has long been familiar with the automobile and favored the tank to the horse. Perhaps this was only a fad, a reflection of the motorized age. Only few concerned themselves with the development of strategic ideas which the motor could bring. This was a struggle of ideas and in our country until 1933 it could naturally be only theoretical.

It is entirely wrong to reproach the older men who were our leaders at that time with having failed to recognize fully and to develop the potentialities of the motor. Neither in France nor in England do we see the older generation more progressive in any way. In France everything remained the same, in England hotheads such as General Fuller and more moderate men such as Lidell Hart fought against the older generation which was in control. England at least makes attempts, but no advances in strategic concepts.

In France the tanks remained a tactical means of combat, but in England experiments already indicated a more independent use.

That the air force would have considerable significance was realized from 1918 on, although peacetime air traffic developed all over the earth, little progress was made.

Only in Russia and in Germany under Hitler did technology develop unhindered from the military point of view. Both were dictatorships,

free from inhibitions and not tied to hidebound traditions.

This promotion by the government itself forced the military element to go along. At this point the Reichswehr becomes the new Wehrmacht, the republic becomes a dictatorship. The formation of strategic concepts of mechanized warfare is thus seen to have received its practical impulse only in the period of rearmament.

B. The Rearmament

1. The Increasing Influence of the Motor

The new regime encouraged the use of the automobile in civilian life. Cars were cheap and small, easy to purchase on the installment plan, and the autobahns were built. The German youth were quick to adopt and enjoy the modern pleasure car, but from the military standpoint, the struggle between the older and younger generation still went on.

The majority of our top leaders were bound to traditions and disliked the motor. Even if they finally recognized the inevitable change, they did so only with the mind rather than the heart. The old Prussian-German traditions had considerable influence. A very few of the top leaders recognized the new era and fought for mechanization. The youth was on the side of these older few, and even loyalties as old as those of the cavalry were transferred to the armored units.

The Luftwaffe, however, rose unhampered and unencumbered by old traditions.

Here again the youth led the way; a new type of hero arose - the tanker and the airman.

In Germany the following advances were made:

(1.) Panzer divisions, motorized infantry divisions, motorized light infantry divisions were developed.

(2.) Motorized reconnaissance battalions, artillery, antitank defense, etc. were organized.

(3.) Motorization of the supply branch was made.

(4.) The Luftwaffe was developed - it was so important that it became the third Wehrmacht branch.

(5.) SS units all motorized were organized.

But alongside of these modernizations the bulk of the Army remained old, that is, consisting of infantry divisions, on foot and on horseback, but perhaps interspersed with small motorized units. However, in 1939 we were far ahead of our enemies.

But all these organizational prerequisites alone were not enough. They had to be tactically and strategically recognized and exploited. From 1935 on the problem of operational control possibilities was further explored.

From 1935 to 1937 I was tactics instructor at the War College. We searched for new ideas on the map and in theory. We were still in the groping stage.

In the Army, in the field units, in the General Staff, in the special staffs, this search was likewise well under way.

The aim was to exploit the motor strategically, in the air and on the ground; hence strategic and independent Army and Luftwaffe units had to be created.

If the advantages of mechanized warfare were to be brought to bear strategically, entirely new ways of thinking were required for execution. The great strategic ideas of the wide envelopment, bypassing, cutting off of rear communications on the ground and from the air were old and familiar. Now the point was to find a mode of execution with the new means of the motorized vehicle.

In addition there were the new important problems of supply and communication for these rapid, motorized Army units. Moreover these new divisions and corps needed a tactically appropriate organization — all these things were only in the experimental stage.

The motorized divisions also had to have a different tactical training, for after the strategic movement they were to engage in decisive tactical fighting -- this, too, was only in the experimental stage.

The motor, of course, was virtually made for large envelopments, bypasses, raids far in the rear, for surprise shifts and large-scale feints. It was the "open sesame" for finding the way back to the war of quick movement, rapid decisions and warfare in which all conceivable strategic and tactical modes of fighting are used.

But once the development of strategic ideas had gained a firm foothold the objective was to teach the commanders to think in terms of the motor. A commander of a panzer division had to think differently than

one of an old infantry division. If he could not or did not the value of the unit was lost, since it was not exploited.

The same held true for the strategic Luftwaffe, which was developed, especially in our country. We know that our great strategic and quick successes in Poland 1939, in the West 1940 and on the Balkans and in the beginning Russian Campaign 1941 were primarily due to the novelty of motorized units on the ground and in the air.

This new motorized warfare took all our enemies by surprise at the beginning of World War II. At first they had nothing anywhere equal to oppose.

The bulk of the Army, i.e. the old infantry corps and divisions, drawn along by the large motorized units, performed superhuman achievements in marching and caught up with the motorized units in an astonishingly short time. They performed in battle what they would perform as old units, but the lead and the decisive turn of events were brought about by the motorized units.

Thus we see in World War II, especially during the first half, how motorized armies can break through, envelop, bypass, put up delaying resistance; we see their power doubled through their flexibility and speed.

Already it was believed that the solid front and trench warfare idea had been overcome and that the motor had given the new general the new means to achieve old greatness.

2. Shortage of Time

From 1933 on the inner political revolution brought one

dramatic political change after another. The Army and the Navy were armed and the Luftwaffe was created.

In these years before the war the Wehrmacht represented a combination between a standing cadre army and a militia. Everything was strained to the utmost, improvised and in no way internally consolidated. It was not prepared for a war, especially not for a long war. From 1919 to 1935 there were no trained reserves; but above all the Army's materiel and supply situation was a hand to mouth affair. The continuous alert, the deployment of parts of the Army hither and yon because of foreign political commitments did not contribute to a consolidation either. This is not to criticize the spirit and the good will. Both were over-abundantly present, but they alone do not make a good army.

Our Army became an army only after the Polish Campaign through systematic training.

That we nevertheless could have such successes as we did was due to the tremendous effect of the new motorized monster. We simply overran the old world.

But we must not deceive ourselves into overlooking the fact that despite all bravery, all readiness for sacrifices, all perseverance on the part of the troops the hard, even, internal structure was missing.

Also missing, after the first major losses, were the constantly trained reserves emanating from their regular service periods.

The technical and ideological divergence between the officer and noncommissioned officer corps made itself distinctly felt.

A comparison with the officer corps of 1813/15 will show many similarities. The revolutionary spirit believes it cannot waste time in consolidation and conservation — it must drive ahead. One cannot whisk powerful armies into existence, especially today in the technical age. Technical arms require fighters with long-term training. In former times militias could also win victories as the primitive weapons permitted them to do so.

3. Improvisation as a Result of Motorization and the Need for Haste

Overhasty erection of a revolutionary system always leads to improvisation.

The period before and during the Wars of Liberation 1813/15 was revolutionary. Out of nothing a new Prussian Army had to be created through improvisation. But only through the war did it become hard and fit. The popular legend of the Landwehr must be reduced to its proper proportions. In reality it was not worth very much in the beginning, ran away, needed the unpopular line army to cling to and became a useful unit only in the fire.

The armies of the French Revolution, the units of the Boers 1899-1902 and of the Red Army after 1917 were improvised. All needed time and training to become soldiers. It was similar with us from 1935-39.

There were only a few motorized units during this period and they could not be fully developed and trained.

The commanders were mentally and practically not yet fully

aware of the capabilities of these new phenomena. The cavalry commanders were the old tradition-bound army men. The new Panzer commanders had vision and drive, but they lacked education and training, and the majority among the officers of motorized units were still novices in 1939.

Not only was improvisation necessary in the field of organization but it was also necessary from a psychological point of view.

Most of the high commanders to whom motorized units were assigned were unfamiliar with their opportunities and had not yet penetrated into the nature of the strategic command of large motorized units.

Hence there were differences of opinion between commanders of army groups and armies on the one hand and commanders of Panzer corps and so forth on the other.

In the General Staff things were the same. The General Staff Officer, too, had to rethink and relearn which could not be done in a few years; he, too, had to improvise and revise all his strategic thinking.

Conclusion

The old organization of the Army High Command of World War II evolved from the organization of the Supreme Army Command of World War I. This study is more concerned with the psychological development then with the organizational.

The situation is not surprising. One need only realize that Moltke I, Count Schlieffen, Ludendorff, and even von Seeckt would probably have been

rendered helpless by this mechanical revolution in the air and on the ground.

In 1912 we had a battalion exercise on the garrison training grounds at Erfurt. Above us a flying machine of the type "Schade" was chugging its way. With a roar it circled the grounds at an altitude of a few hundred meters. We were just having a critique. The horses reared before the flying shadow and the din. Our nearly fifty-year-old battalion commander was very much annoyed at this disturbance and ordered the battalion adjutant, "Chase the plane from the grounds." All four company commanders nodded their agreement, the first lieutenants thought of nothing, and we youngest second lieutenants laughed.

Everything takes time. An idea may be novel and visionary, but it takes years until the idea becomes reality.

The spiritual development of strategic thinking from Moltke to Schlieffen, Ludendorff, Seeckt to the OKH of World War II is a clear line of evolution, which had to adapt itself to the reality of the time and place rather than the idea.

In 1935 only old divisions wer available, in 1939 one-fifth of the Army may have been motorized units, four-fifth old units. The OKH stood at the threshold of a new era, but had to calculate with the old one.

One cannot skip an epoch, and if one does skip it, one falls into the ocean like Icarus and is drowned. An army high command, however, must not be an Icarus but must calculate with sober facts.

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Herman Foertsch
General der Infanterie

Heinersreuth

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Basic Concepts and Organization for the Conduct of War Prior to World War II.

Translator: P.L. Muschamp

Appendix 2

Three explanatory notes:

1. Under "basic concepts" I include all those lessons offered to any generation by the past or drawn from its own times, as well as considerations reflecting on future developments.

2. I assume that the actual organization of the various leading departments has been dealt with and is known. In this study I shall therefore confine myself to a critical contemplation of the organization as a whole and to evaluate it on the basis of its "basic concepts" alone.

3. What I mean by "conduct of war" (Kriegsfuehrung) will be made clear early in the study relative to considerations on the work of Clausewitz. At that time subordinate concepts pertinent thereto will also be defined. These definitions will apply likewise to the subsequent sections.

Appendix 2

I. Up to World War I.

1. The conduct of war from the recent past down to the present rests ideologically upon the results of the French Revolution. The ideas of Napoleon, and even more so the revolutionary thoughts and actions of his time, are reflected in the wars of the 19th century. Spiritual freedom, the elevation of the population to the position of citizens of a state, the nationalism which was based on these new ideas, and in the military sphere, the growth of "mass" armies, the introduction of conscription, and battles involving allied armies, are all due to the great upheavals at the end of the 18th century. And it is interesting to note that these effects, especially in the military sphere, left a stronger, and, in part, earlier imprint upon Germany than was the case in other countries. The philosophy of life among the German military leaders at the time of the Wars of Liberation was determined by the ideologies of the French Revolution to a far greater extent than was generally believed or admitted. The Saxon General Ruehle von Lilienstern in those days declared that it was the task of the times "to militarize the people and nationalize the armies." And it was a German, General Karl von Clausewith, who made the most comprehensive study and recorded the profoundest considerations on the phenomenon "war". Other contemporary military men also studied thoroughly this period. General Jomini drew his deductions from Napoleon's actions and tried to fit them into a system. The Austrian Archduke Carl weighed his experiences and conclusions drawn therefrom. But no one before or after has written more validly and exhaustively than Clausewitz in a work which he himself considered

merely a fragment. The era of scientific militarism began with him. The "Book on War" (Buch vom Kriege) was not thought of as a manual but as a study; it created no "system". Nor was it as much a record of experience as the product of reflection. Nevertheless it served as a text as no other book. Clausewitz is war philosopher Number One, from whom all others culled ideas down to this day. To be sure, this work was not read by the bulk of officers, let alone studied; and it often appears to have been more profitably followed abroad than at home. On the other hand Clausewitz' ideas became so widely accepted by German military leaders that they acquired the force of directives. Obviously, what he said regarding operational means for the conduct of war is now obsolete; so also, in some cases, because of the subsequent course of events, are some of his basic concepts. The validity of his fundamental ideas, however, is maintained to this day. To make certain that the following expositions are clearly understood, a definition of terms used appears advisable.

I use the term "conduct of war" (Kriegsfuehrung) to refer to all operations designed to put the country on a war footing as well as to the governmental policies or politics during a war. A division is made between the military, economic, and intellectual conduct of war. The military conduct of war will sometimes be referred to as "strategy". It includes the use of war materiel and is the business of soldiers and generals. It also concerns all measures designed to insure the best use of war materiel. The execution of the plan takes place through "operations";

moves and battles employing this material. "Tactics", on the other hand, refers to the handling of troops in or for battle. The economic conduct of war includes all economic resources for war and the economic processes for the purpose of waging war. Finally, the intellectual conduct of war includes all spiritual media to the same end, such as education, propaganda, scientific research, law, and diplomacy. And just as the over-all conduct of war is concerned both with its own and with enemy forces, the same applies with regard to the military, the economic, and particularly the intellectual conduct of war.

It is very difficult to boil down the ideas and teachings of Clausewitz for present day consumption. The essential can be summed up as follows: War is "nothing but an extension of government policy with other means". It is not only "a political act" as he also calls it, but a "real political instrument, an extension of political processes, a carrying out of political objectives with other means." War as a national assertion, as phenomenon of state and society, is therefore not an isolated act but a means, an instrument in the service of policy. It follows that when policy resorts to this means its influence upon the conduct of war is universal. It sets the war's objectives, it guides the war, it makes those decisions which are necessary for the over-all conduct of war. Supreme decisions, therefore, according to Clausewitz, are not to be determined by the army but by the government.

War is an act of violence. It calls for the release of all energies. Animated by spiritual forces the business of war makes use of all suitable

means, whether of the mind or of the substance to achieve its ends. Though the term "total war" was not used until long after his time, Clausewitz was clearly the originator of the theory of total war. What Clausewitz said of soldierly virtues, whether of the commander or of his troops, remains as valid today as it was in his time.

War, according to Clausewitz, is the sphere of greatest uncertainty. Prior thinking and planning is therefore of highest military importance, without forgetting that "the greatest daring is often the greatest wisdom". His discussions concerning the "functions" of war also lose nothing of their validity with the passing of time, and warn against overestimating the value of "faith" - à la Hitler. The need for a healthy combination of daring and caution in planning is emphasized by Clausewitz.

War, as an act of violence, would in its absolute form call for the destruction of the enemy. That, by its nature, is the end of war. But a war is also conceivable which remains on a relative basis, scaled to one's needs, aimed at a limited objective. This is the nature of a war of exhaustion which seeks to defer decision, leaving it to time and circumstance. This brings Clausewitz to one of his first rules of war, namely, the necessity of concentrating action and effort in order to attain maximum effectiveness, in the over-all picture as well as in specific decisive places. From that principle he concludes that while as a matter of strategy offense is better than defense the contrary is true in some tactical situations, when defense is more effective than

attack. Defensive action, however, can never lead to a decision if not followed agressively by lightning retaliation. Add to the above his thesis relative to the importance of the culmination point in battle and the need to keep a sharp look-out for the favorable turn and you no doubt have the most basic and enduring precepts inherited from Clausewitz.

It often appears that in spite of the theoretical acceptance of Clausewitz' conclusions the German people were particularly guilty of not acting in accordance with this acceptance, if not indeed of doing the very opposite. This is particularly true in respect to his first mentioned principle, making war a political instrument serving the ends of national policy and involving the subordination of military planning to government planning. But perhaps our military failures were not so much due to lack of understanding or wanton disregard as to impotency and the force of circumstances. Outright negligence in the application of principle to practice was evident only in regard to Clausewitz' "pre-condition of foresight", or the estimation of consequence. Most German military leaders, on the other hand, did understand Clausewitz' precepts for the full utilization of the military potential, even though it cannot be denied that certain aspects were overemphasized, as for instance his precepts relating to moral force, or those relating to the battle of extermination. These cases will be looked into further. The fact remains that Clausewitz more than anyone else laid the ideological foundations for the German army and that the most successful strategists,

such as Moltke, and the most penetrating minds, such as Graf Schlieffen, owed their victories and their successes to his teachings.

For thirty years after the publication of Clausewitz' "Buch vom Kriege", Germany was not put to the test of war. As for the rest of the world, during these decades, the torch of war never burned for more than a short time and only in minor conflicts of a kind which contained nothing instructive for military leaders. It looked as if, with the passing of Napoleon and his conquerors, great wars had also passed away. But there was a measure introduced in time of peace which deserves special mention in these discussions: the reforms of the Prussian army ordered by William I along the lines of Clausewitz' ideas on the subject. These reforms sought to increase the striking power of the standing army and to comply with his defensive prerequisites for victory in regard to "seeking a decision", "quickest and most concentrated action", and "total destruction". How correct these theories were and how successful the corresponding reforms, was shown not only by the victories of 1864, 1866, and 1870/71, but also by the American Civil War in which both parties at the beginning lacked a strong standing army. The long duration of the latter, unusual in those times, ought also to have given a hint to European observers. That war was not adequately evaluated, and not only in Germany. It was not until after the bitter experiences of World War I that military specialists realised that the American Civil War was in its nature much closer to the conflict of 1914/18 than the last, short-lived, old-type clash

of arms won by General Moltke. In the American Civil War modern total warfare for the first time showed its full features as mass economic and envelopment warfare, as a form of war which, even though still in a mild form, involved the entire nation, causing one and all to be involved and to suffer. It is regrettable, though easily understandable, that the German General Staff failed to see the shadows which this war cast across the brilliant victories of General Moltke. Its lessons did not become a part of our basic concepts.

If, after Moltke, General Staffs became everywhere identified with "the military mind", "the brain of the army", admired, hated, imitated, in defeat even prohibited, it was not so much because of Moltke's theories as because of his deeds. With complete reliance on the theories of Clausewitz, but adapting these to the conditions and spirit of the times, Moltke won classic victories in the most concentrated wars known to history. His fame is not lessened by the fact that during the wars fought by Germany between 1864 and 1871 statesmanship created the best possible conditions for military strategy. In this respect few generals ever had it so easy - in spite of the friction which often existed between civil and military authorities. But on the other hand few statesmen ever had at their disposal such a perfectly functioning instrument of politics as Bismarck had in Moltke's army. For this reason the fact that war never attained more glory than the political objective required may be the essential lesson of Moltke's epoch. These wars were also the last pure "soldiers' wars", the last, that is,

in which the task of the army was completely separate from the task of the civilian population. This circumstance, at the beginning of World War I, led the German military command into errors which will be pointed out later. In the sphere of military war leadership, in operations and strategy, the basic concepts established by Moltke, were ideal. The fundamental principle regarding speediest and most concentrated action was applied to perfection by him. All his victories were won with clear superiority and led to the actual destruction, that is, to the elimination of the enemy force. This result was due to foresight in appraising current situations as well as foresight in the use of technical means to serve the aims of operations and battles. In this connection it should be remembered that it was Moltke who pronounced the axiom that no strategic plan could extend "with any reasonable degree of certainty beyond the first encounter with the main force of the enemy. All succeeding acts of war are not premeditated but spontaneous actions depending on tactical skill." For, as Moltke categorically stated: "Strategy is a system of improvisations. It is more than a science, it is the application of knowledge to practical life, the extension of the original main idea in accordance with changing circumstances, the art of performing under the pressure of difficult conditions. Strategy is the application of common sense to the conduct of war; its theories do not extend very far beyond the first rules of common sense; its value rests entirely in practical application. It is a matter of judging correctly the ever changing situation and resorting

to the simplest and most natural solution with firmness and prudence. Thus war becomes an art, but an art served by many sciences. War, like any other science, is not learned by nationalistic, but by empirical methods. In war, as in art, there is no general norm; in neither can talent be replaced by any rule of thumb." Each sentence, each thought in the above quotation is a golden word for a military leader in time of war. Thus taught and first practised, the "improvisations" of Moltke's art of war never bear the stamp of thoughtlessness, but rest on his chosen motto: "first weigh, then dare." They are thoroughly considered not only from the friendly point of view but also from the viewpoint of the enemy. Thus he was able to lead separately marching armies to a unified attack, could force the enemy to fight battles with reversed fronts,* and win clear decisions through wars of envelopment. There is no Moltke system, no Moltke recipe for victory; and yet no one after Clausewitz won so many adherents, or, by his deeds, laid firmer foundations for the theory of strategy than this general who won his victories in the prime of his life. Strongly influencing the General Staffs' studies on the Franco-Prussian War, he maintained for the nation the nimbus of the near-infallibility of its war leaders and at the same time managed to show army specialists how to evaluate errors and deficiencies and turn them to profit. It was not his fault that the generation living through a long period of peace failed to envisage

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* No doubt a reference to the Battle of Sedan in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71. In this battle Moltke attacked the French forces from the rear, compelling them to about face.

future developments properly. Moltke himself, for instance, in one of his last speaches, almost prophetically outlined the possibilities of a future seven years' war. From a study of this speach on the nature of long wars many valuable conclusions might have been drawn.

Wars of world-wide interest between Moltke's victories and World War I were minor in scope and in their nature contained no evident warnings of things to come. The Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War were never more than duels confined to a limited area. And yet the military methods brought forth in the course of conflict deserved to be taken notice of, even in Germany. The Boer War clearly outlined the forms of a "war of annihilation", with its effects upon civilian populations, and pointed to the nature of "total war". All that was noted in such studies as were made was in the nature of tactical considerations, and these often led to wrong conclusions. Special circumstances affecting tactical events were generally overlooked. However, in the Russo-Japanese War, the long drawn-out engagements and extended positional battle lines devoid of concentrations were considered a special case. Here also the important aspects of the war as such were overlooked, with attention riveted only on tactical experiences, especially in regard to the effect of new weapons, and many of the lessons were accepted with reluctance. Was it because of the general intellectual decline which led from the well-rounded military man of Scharnhorst's time to the purely professional type of the Ludendorff school? Or was the trend toward specialization in all fields of knowledge and research already exerting its disintegrating influence in this field also?

Conclusions were drawn in the general political sphere. A system of alliances sprang up and paved the way for wars involving large areas, wars for which even the entire European continent would threaten to be too small. The time of armed peace reached its apex, a restless time in which only the fear of war still delayed war.

This concern for peace in all European countries greatly stirred up thinking relative to the military patterns of an impending war. It is logical that in the two countries militarily most concerned, Germany and France, special attention was given to these problems by the Chief of the German General Staff, Count Schlieffen, and the Director of the French Military Academy, General Foch. Schlieffen's ability as a general was never put to a test, but Foch was able to earn deserved fame.

Both concerned themselves chiefly with the strategic and operational probabilities of the future. Both performed as peacetime instructors without actual war experience of their own, but their teachings scarcely went beyond their national borders. Foch's work, at least, was little known in Germany, so that his theories could not have contributed to the basic concepts underlying German strategy. Nevertheless they are briefly outlined in this work since their very difference makes many things clearer.

Schlieffen, starting, of course, from the theories of Clausewitz and the performance of Moltke, supplemented by his own wartime experience as a General Staff officer from 1870 to 1871, taught an operational system. His constant and even importunate warnings direct attention to battles of

annihilation through envelopment. He had to contend with superior forces, and in the annihilating battle of envelopment he saw the best chance of leading a numerically inferior force to victory. (The historical arguments, particularly the copious study "Cannae", are well known.) He teaches that the decisive battles must be sought and not fought as opportunity offers. Consequently a major portion of his teachings is devoted to the operational movements of large bodies of troops kept tightly in hand. Schlieffen foresaw the extension of future fronts, perhaps more through his appreciation of increased fire power and the consequent reduced manpower requirements of certain front line sectors than because of the appearance of mass armies. Schlieffen also paid special attention to the technical development of means of combat; he drew a picture of the field commander of the future which corresponded closely to subsequent realities. His name is inseparably associated with the concepts "attack", "envelopment", and "destruction". Due to lack of data it is difficult to verify and perhaps prove what I say here -- it is more a matter of feeling: that Schlieffen's grandiose exhortations resulted in a certain onesidedness in operational and tactical thinking, primarily through a neglect of defense and its various forms, but also through an underestimation of the value and effect of statesmanship before and during a war. Schlieffen himself had certainly not intended this to happen. His successors do not appear to have understood him in the manner one would expect from the lifelong veneration in which he was held by all his pupils, a veneration which found expression in the succeeding generation in a form that almost gave the impression of a cult. If the events of World War I are tested against

Schlieffens teachings one finds many a deviation therefrom. Whether these deviations were errors and weaknesses of lesser lights rather than unforeseeable developments, it is not easy for the present generation to decide without presumption.

In comparison with Schlieffen's teachings it is noticeable that the French strategist Foch laid more stress on the over-all war plan than on the operational plan, that he set a higher value on the concentration of forces for a battle which might be favored by chance circumstance, that he reserved greater liberty of action to the commanding general, and that, though taking an evaluation of an enemy as a starting basis, he did not so much favor working on the definite assumption of any specific possible enemy. For all these differences, national trends of thought may be responsible. To the superficial observer, Foch may often appear to be more of a Moltke pupil than Moltke's German successors. To my knowledge the teachings of Foch were never a part of the basic concepts for Germany's conduct of war. Perhaps they would have been just as valuable a corrective as a close study of the ideas of Field Marshal von der Goltz-Pascha, who in his writings drew what I consider a very excellent outline of the future war. His views regarding general defense policy were taken into account; his many-sided views on strategic questions received less attention. The civilian Professor Delbrueck, was also rejected with his views on the significance of a strategy of exhaustion, views which were almost alarmist, and this rejection surely did some harm to comprehensive thinking on the subject. Many a biased assessment of the enemy's conduct

of war, or his capacity for armament and the consequent effect upon Germany's continued capacity to resist, may be due to this neglect.

The above may be the most important basic concepts with which Germany's military leaders entered the first world conflict for Germany's existence. To reduce the subject matter to formulas (with the attendant weakness of the catch phrase to which all formulas are subject) we find: good but one-sided analysis of the operational problems; inadequate consideration of the relationship between the over-all conduct of war and military conduct of war; too much emphasis on moral, too little emphasis on material values.

2. An examination rather than a representation of the organization for the conduct of war up to World War I, shows the following peculiarities: a system of strictly personal, autocratic leadership, derived from Napoleon and the monarchic principle, had changed at a progressive pace to a system of impersonal, "serving" leadership which finds its expression particularly in the position held by the Chief of the General Staff, as the professional strategist subservient to the purpose of his mission. The monarch availed himself of many offices clearly separated according to their specific functions — even in the military field which was divided into a Minister of War and a Chief of the General Staff — both working side by side without a departmental superior. This process developed to a point where there were over twenty posts, the incumbents of which were responsible to the King alone as his advisors, while Bavaria, Wuerttemberg and Saxony, as member states of the German Confederate Reich,

each had their own Minister of War. Bavaria even had a General Staff. In time of war, however, the command was concentrated more firmly under the Kaiser as the War Lord. There was no joint armed forces, no "Wehrmacht", the army and navy planned separately and fought separately. Economic or psychological preparation of the nation for war was beyond the realm of official thought, since only short wars were expected. The difference between the wartime and peacetime organization of the military command machinery found expression chiefly in an increase of personnel and the creation of substitute home authorities. Thus, it was inevitable that the great armed conflict of 1914 revealed much unpreparedness which had to be corrected under the stress of war. It is poor consolation that our opponents showed no better judgment at first, and it may well be the only advantage of a lost war that reflection concerning the deficiencies and errors of the past sharpen perception regarding future possibilities.

II. Lessons of World War I.

1. It is not the task of the present work to trace the course of World War I even in broadest outline. But whoever seeks to learn the basic concepts underlying the German conduct of the war and of German strategy, must try to discover the lessons of this war and examine them as sources of basic concepts of importance in subsequent developments.

The disharmony between policy and strategy, between the over-all and the military conduct of war, was shown at the beginning of the war during the advance through Belgium, and later on with the Army High Command's interference in politics. The Reich Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg wrote in his memoirs: "The position which the war left to political leadership in regard to operations on land and sea was determined by force of circumstances. It was impossible for a military layman to judge correctly military possibilities, let alone military necessities." This declaration of bankruptcy is just as far removed from the theories of Clausewitz and Bismarck's model example as is Ludendorff's complaint that circumstances forced the supreme army command to interfere in politics. If that had been true the commander should have changed places with the political leader. Then also, the complete lack of economic and psychological preparation for war shows that in the sphere outside the military conduct of war Moltke was perfectly right when he said that an error in the first move in a war can scarcely be compensated for later on in the war. The fact that a uniform war plan was lacking on the side of the Central Powers, and that a joint supreme command was not formed,

even in the time of greatest political and military need, is typical of the nature of coalition wars in which there are very few instances in history where this demand was met.

In the field of strategy the prevailing idea, "destruction out of the inner line" (Vernichtung aus der inneren Linie), bore the stamp of Schlieffen's operational plan. When the latter did not lead to a quick decision and the war lost itself in hitherto unknown space and time, there was no operational plan, in spite of all theory and experience, capable of disengaging the situation, and the war came to a stalemate behind barbed wire and fixed positions, succumbed to the effect of massed materiel, and only the final offensive, born of strategic defense - the Entente's flashing sword of retaliation - gave the victory to our opponent. Clausewitz' deliberations on the importance of recognizing the culmination point seemed to have been forgotten. The whole strategic sequence of campaigns and attempts to win a decision reveals a long chain of interlocking events, action on one side causing counter action on the other; again and again the well-prepared plans of the one side were disrupted by the anticipatory actions of the other; a strategy, indeed, which revealed itself as a "system of improvisations".

The extension of fronts all the way between the sea and the mountains left no possibility of outflanking movements. The envelopment, Schlieffen's ideal, was only possible in the wake of a breakthrough. This was a form of operations relatively foreign to German thinking, and which, owing to the improved long range weapons plus the increased defensive power, presented

brand new problems. "Operational battles", - an expression coined by Foch before the war, - lasting for days or even weeks, gave this war its imprint and showed the critical observer that the new features of the Russo-Japanese War were not unique to that theater but corresponded closely to the trends of the time. Combat action from the deep rear of the battle position became the rule and linear strategy appeared definitely dead. Changes were also necessary in the economic field in which immense efforts and entirely new decisions were required of Germany, the besieged fortress. Enormous ammunition requirements presented just as much of a strategic problem as did the new types of weapons, the radio and motorized transport. German military leaders were slow to introduce the tank, which remained for the time being a purely tactical means of combat; its revolutionary strategic significance was not yet recognized.

This combination of fire power and mobility was not then seen as the medium which would lead the way out of the static war. The first defense against this combine was a propaganda one, an appeal to "faith", that same faith which led to such exaggerations in every sphere during World War II. Combat action from and in the air brought the third dimension into the war and indicated the opening of a totally new epoch in the art of warfare. The elements of time and space contracted, but the new possibilities were enormous. The use of lethal gases brought the science of chemistry into the war service and also opened up entirely new possibilities. War no longer seemed to follow the will of the

strategist, but to lose itself in its own channels. The war of materiel and of masses, the national war in its form of total warfare had arrived, not yet fully grasped in all its new aspects but rather considered an inconvenient intruder upon the old established Moltke-type military thinking. The last real land war had run its course.

The war at sea revealed misconceptions of the Tirpitz school; it was the same positional type warfare on the water. The submarine, hitherto not recognized as the best weapon of the weaker side, also brought about changes in naval warfare. Finally an increasingly effective propaganda machine came into being at the side of military arms. It served to weaken the enemy's will to fight and to strengthen one's own, with means and methods which appeared to have nothing left in common with traditional chivalry in the field of combat. Patriotic propaganda became the new weapon of defense and lies became the purveyors of psychological offensives .

In the course of the war the revolutionary developments demanded a high degree of adaptability, flexibility from the top men. German leadership was not always able to meet these demands.

2. It has already been pointed out that there was no essential difference between the wartime and peacetime organization of Germany's military command. In time the Kaiser's nominal authority as Commander in Chief passed more and more into the hands of the Army High Command, which logically but a bit reluctantly assumed supreme command. If it was not according to plan, it served to meet the succession of emergencies. A

Joint Supreme Command for the forces of the coalition did not come into existence, not even at the end of the war. Self-contained organizations, plans, and authorities simply grew up out of their need. For economic and psychological warfare there was no over-all pattern. It is a remarkable fact that the Entente countries, with their democratic and parliamentary governments came to adopt stricter rules and more sweeping methods than the monarchic parties of the central powers. Even a joint command under Foch was able to exercise its authority with a strategic reserve under its direct control. In his book, "Die obersten Gewalten im Weltkriege" (The Supreme Powers in the World War), General Moser gives a very informative presentation of these problems, which remains of interest to this day. The fact that in spite of these subsequently recognized deficiencies an encircled Germany was able to hold out four and a half years and to remain the motive force in all that happened within the orbit of the Central Powers seems to me to be due to the military qualities of the nation rather than the result of organization and planning. The defeat of 1918 gave us ample opportunity to benefit from its lessons. It is a fact that the pangs of a lost war lead to fuller comprehension through searching analysis of causes and events than does the joy of even a barely won victory.

3. In a study of the basic concepts affecting subsequent developments it is particularly important to remember in what spheres and in what direction the evaluation of the lessons took place.

Reflection on Clausewitz' basic law concerning war as an

instrument of politics and the interrelations between politics and strategy was symptomatically left to the politicians and professional historians. The reason for this may well lie in the legend of the stab in the back (Dolchstosslegende) and anxiety about the question of war guilt. True to what had by now become tradition, professional military literature confined itself to operational and tactical problems. The ideological concept of total war as outlined in Ludendorff's writings, bears little resemblance to that of Clausewitz. When Moltke wrote that "politics should not intrude into operations" it may be assumed that he placed emphasis on the word "intrude"; in any case his own attitude was always contrary to this theory. If Count Blumenthal, Chief of General Staff to the Crown Prince in 1870, is reported to have said that "the politics of the Chancellor have nothing to do with us", then this may have been due to momentary vexation. In any case it remains a false concept which should serve rather as a warning. On the other hand the Commander in Chief of World War I erred when he wrote: "All the theories of Clausewitz",-referring to those concerning the problems of policy and strategy, - "must be thrown overboard. War and politics serve the ends of a people's struggle for self preservation, but war is the highest expression of a nation's will to live. Politics must therefore serve the objectives of the war leaders." It was a dangerous error, but fortunately one which was recognized as such by subsequent military leaders of importance. (Hitler's case is quite another matter. His politics led to war and also dominated the war. As such they were so unacceptable as

to call for both political and military resistance.)

The economic problems were thoroughly explored after World War I, and best of all in Arthur Dix' book "Economic Warfare and War Economy", Psychological warfare, on the other hand, yielded few considerations of a critical and scientific nature, though the disclosures of the American professor Lasswell won considerable notice in professional circles.

On the operational side we may point to the numerous memoirs of German field commanders, such as Groener's "Heritage of Count Schlieffen" and "The Commander Against His Will" (Der Feldherr wider Willen.) The taciturn Hermann Stegemann won much attention in Germany. The writing of the official history made very slow progress and remained a purely descriptive presentation. Critical attention, almost too much, was paid to the battle of the Marne as the turning point of the war. In this connection it is significant that problems relative to the war of movement were considered first and that those relative to positional warfare, materiel, and mass came very late into the discussion. Even up to 1939, for instance, the Historical Division of the General Staff had not yet published any critique of the breakthrough of 1917/18. Krafft von Dellmannsingen's thorough study "The Breakthrough" did not meet with the reception it deserved. Although much concern was shown concerning the question of positional warfare and how this 'degeneration of warfare' might be avoided in the future, the thinking along this line generally did not go deep enough. The potentials of technology were avoided in these discussions. It would appear to be a peculiarity

of the German people to set too high a value on moral strength as a counterpart to technical science. Armored commands and air warfare soon played a greater part, but the fact that these two arms were prohibited to the German army after 1918 restrained open discussion of all related problems. The interpretation of these problems abroad and subsequent reaction in Germany, will be discussed in the next section.

All in all there was an earnest probing begun in all directions. But the Treaty of Versailles had condemned the German Reich to complete impotency, had forbidden a General Staff, and had driven underground what elsewhere could remain public.

The basic concepts of German conduct of war had been expanded to meet developments in the art of war. It is part of the tragedy of the German military tradition that so many lessons were soon dismissed or drowned out by false doctrines and a lack of objectivity. Sections IV and V will attempt to explain these points in detail.

III. The Period of Impotency.

The Treaty of Versailles had made Germany defenseless. The tiny Reichswehr was nonpolitical, as was emphasized somewhat illogically and for special reasons, meaning that it was not attached to any party. It had become a power factor of internal politics rather than an instrument of foreing policy. A declaration by Stresemann on an unofficial occasion admirably stated the case as follows: "Give me a different army and I will give you a different foreign policy." Whatever was done for

the defense of the Reich, all planning and training, necessarily remained incomplete. But to be defenseless does not mean to be without intelligence and it is doubtful that any army in the world pondered more deeply over the problems of future developments than this rump of an army. If the officers' corps was not to lose its professional ethos entirely it could live for but two ideas: either this small professional army was a model for the promised general disarmament which was considered necessary and possible, or it was a transitional phase on the road to the reinvigoration of Germany through an arms equalization plan based on international agreements. It was soon evident that there was no hope for general demobilization. Consequently, the Reichswehr had to consider itself the preserver of a tradition with future potentialities. This idea found such strong expression in the spiritual life of the Reichswehr that an exaggerated view of the German professional army as an elite body of officers became evident throughout the world. That it lacked all modern weapons, that it was forbidden to have and did not have armor, airplanes and submarines was easily forgotten. What was done in secret with foreign help was nothing more than the keeping alive of an idea, not a rearmament. The task of checking over the lessons of World War I led to the discussion of important problems some of which were raised abroad at the time, and which are worth being recalled here since they seem of current interest in connection with a study of future possibilities. They will be only briefly outlined here as they appeared at the time, because they show an ideological basis for the build-up of

a Wehrmacht internationally acceptable at that time.

The outcome of World War I had raised the question of whether a modern war could still be decided by military strength alone, or, as appeared to have been the case in the war just concluded, economic and psychological warfare would be decisive. The fact that no nation on earth was willing to do without its military forces was proof enough in itself of the importance of an armed force in any then conceivable future war. But even a theoretical consideration of the question had to lead to the conclusion that while economic means, or the lack thereof, had a hitherto unprecidented effect on the outcome of a war, as long as this source of power needed military protection, the protecting forces could only be eliminated by similar forces on land, and sea, and in the air. A final clash of arms would be necessary for the exploitation of even the greatest extra-military successes. The same may be said for the effects of propaganda. Nothing served to clarify this question as much as a statement, most influential at the time, made by Harold D. Lasswell, professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, "What portion of Wilson's utterances were rhetorical stage performance and what portion the fruit of sober reflection will remain in dispute until the World War will be almost forgotten. But considered as propaganda, his performance was brilliant, for it was he who brewed the poison which industrious propagandists injected into the veins of an already shaky people until it could be pushed over by force of arms." (trans. of translation, cf. orig. text.) The German army had hitherto

underestimated the importance of psychological weapons, which now assumed a greater place in the minds of military leaders.

Military leaders also became more concerned with an evaluation of technical science. The question "Air Warfare or Ground Warfare?" raised by the Italian General Douhet was foremost in their minds. In broad outline Douhet's interpretation of the problem was as follows:

Both ground and naval forces will retain their importance in the future but will not play the decisive role. In the future, ground forces will be concerned only with defense; the attack, and the final outcome of the decision, can be carried out only by the air arm. It is the "space weapon" capable of by-passing ground resistance without battle. Detached from the earth it is capable of reaching and destroying every objective. All fortified positions, all terrain obstacles are nullified, the combat area is unlimited, time and space may quickly be overcome. The air arm is in the position to carry out attacks of a dimension, force and power hitherto unattainable with land-based weapons. The air arm can destroy the enmy's sources of power before a single shot is fired on the ground. It can strike the enemy's capital and most important centers of population, his industries and supply lines, and so reduce the opponent physically and psychologically that he is no longer able or inclined to resist. By this means the decision of the war can be reached more quickly than ever was the case with ground forces. Consequently, wars will be shorter. In order to attain these important objectives with these means, supremacy in the air must be won, that is to say, the opponent must be

prevented from making use of his own air force. To this end, the enemy's air arm must be beaten in air battles or destroyed at its bases. The industries of the enemy must be so kept down that air losses cannot be replaced. Ones own country will then not be exposed to air attacks and the home force can develop its attack potential unrestrained. Therefore, the air arm must be developed as far as possible and the ground and naval forces only as far as they are necessary as a basis for the air war. The problem of armament would be simplified and the costs lessened.

This was Douhet's line of thought. It has been discussed here in such great detail not only because today, after World War II, it seems to contain a sinister prophesy, but because it shows the nature of sign posts before which Germany's military leaders stood if they did give any thought to a rebirth of the German Wehrmacht. Douhet's ideas were rejected because they seemed too restrictive and too exaggerated. The reasons given for this rejection were as follows: The positional warfare assumed by Douhet is not an unsurmountable phenomenon of ground warfare; supremacy in the air is not absolute supremacy; an opponent cannot be compelled to fight for supremacy; air supremacy remains limited in time and space; both camouflage and defense possibilities are greater than assumed by Douhet; what cannot be occupied physically cannot be held permanently; the weather conditions and technological developments also leave an element of doubt. Thus, no one abroad dared to take the decisive step of putting Douhet's ideas into practice, and the combination of land and air warfare remained in effect in World War II.

Appendix 2

Another great problem began to occupy the thoughts of military leaders at that time, namely, the argument over whether armies should be large or small. The arguments of those in favor of small armies varied. Some who accepted Douhet's theories considered large armies superfluous. A second group, of whom the English General Fuller was the best known, consisted of protagonists of motorization and mechanization. These started out with observations on positional warfare, showing how even the largest assembly of old-type troops had not succeeded in bringing about a decisive victory because the defensive power of modern weapons had been greater than the offensive power of unarmored troops. They considered tanks the only weapon capable of overcoming this defensive power, and anticipated a great economy of manpower through the use of armor and furthermore envisioned a considerable reduction in human loss. They contended that quicker decisions of battles and thereby of the war itself would be attained, while rear lines of communication would be more easily interrupted, with the result that many a bloody victory could be replaced by a bloodless maneuver. Smaller costs were considered a further advantage; the effectiveness rather than the size was the decisive factor; large armies were not only unnecessary but also impossible.

Supporters of motorization saw the lack of mobility of large armies as being the main reasons for the unattained, or at least long delayed, decision in World War I. Greater maneuverability was to be restored through greater mobility, thus making superiority at certain

decisive points possible. Consequently large armies were considered superfluous.

In Germany it was considered significant that these ideas came mostly out of England where armies were thought of as small expeditionary forces. For countries with large areas or long frontiers other premises existed. Economic difficulties, the danger of mechanical weapons becoming obsolete, an improved defense against armor, difficulties of terrain, roads, and bridges, and supply and the fact that combat would be impeded by darkness and fog were advanced as counter-arguments.

In the end, General von Seeckt, chief of Germany's small professional army, decided in favor of a small army. He based his arguments on the fear that mass armies had become too cumbersome, were very difficult to lead, and not sufficiently maneuverable. "The mass is getting unwieldy, it can no longer maneuver and therefore cannot win; it can only crush," he wrote in his 'Thoughts of a Soldier' (Gedanken eines Soldaten). He called small but well equipped armies the salvation of the field army. He also asked for, for the security of the country, a larger enrollment for military service, an armed, defensive militia, and provision for the possible organization of an "army of decision" (Entscheidungsarmee, a sort of Volkssturm). Seeckt also gave reasons of economy in support of his proposal, considering large and really well equipped armies too costly. He called for the industry to be made ready for immediate operation and mass production. It was obvious that Seeckt's ideas should attract particular attention and criticism abroad. It was feared, and

quite rightly so, that the outcome of this plan would be the defeat of the small army before it could be replenished or replaced by the masses.

None of the powers found a complete solution along the lines of these revolutionary ideas. A probing was everywhere apparent. German military leadership, although enjoying a greater freedom in so far as they were starting from scratch and were least bound by an old established order, but also unable to observe developments beyond its borders, struggled with these problems but failed to achieve more than a gradual development. It would be unfair to say that the significance of armor and air force was not sufficiently recognized. Compared to developments in other countries our army's basic concepts relative to armament were not antiquated, even if they were not revolutionary. Considering the material basis for the reorganization of the Wehrmacht radical changes could scarcely be expected.

An armed force condemned to impotency will not organize its command primarily to meet the requirements of war. So far as it has any freedom of action at all it will organize its top-levels to meet current needs. To this day it must be recognized as a step forward and as a healthy intermediate stage that the Weimar Republic had a unified Reich Ministry of Defense for the Army and the Navy, that each branch had a unified command under which all formerly independent branches and services were united. Even though this joint armed forces command was limited in scope to representing the armed forces in internal political affairs, to questions of armament and some less important matters, it

was nevertheless a concentration of authority which facilitated the organization of the Wehrmacht. The Army and Navy still maintained their separate headquarters without reduction of their command authority. The General Troops Office,* (Truppenamt) a sort of substitute for the former Army General Staff, retained its relations to the other departments as "chief among its peers." That many functions only closely related to the actual conduct of operations were perhaps concentrated in this department was a minor organizational defect.

* After 1935 the "Allgemeines Truppenamt" again became the Army General Staff.

IV. Rearmament.

1. With the discussion of the basic concepts for Germany's rearmament our study must concern itself with abnormal developments, for the political bases were abnormal. The fact that political ideas were the ruling factor is not in itself unusual in this respect, for the rearmament must be considered as a prelude to the war, The excessive domination of military and professional basic considerations by a political state of mind almost disregarding completely professional opinion was unusual however. It was, and probably still is, unclear what political objectives Hitler had in mind when rearmament entered its open phase in 1935. If Hitler only wanted to defend the Reich, even a legally created Greater Germany, then it was right and proper to take a quick step forward in order to attain as soon as possible a certain and sure basis from which a well knit organization could subsequently be established in peace. But if he was already at that time prepared to accept the risk of a European war or even was planning to go beyond the goal of an enlarged national state, then the rapid and over-hasty rearmament was a risk which probably was not preceded by proper consideration as prescribed by Moltke. For in that case a war of two or several fronts was to be expected along with all the problems which had once before caused the German field army grave anxieties. Military leaders, particularly the Army General Staff, had no illusions on that score. The great element of uncertainty caused by Hitler's foreign policy was quite clear to our military people. No wonder Hitler often expressed his annoyance with the generals who had to

be pressed to rearm.

The inner-political foundation was equally unusual. A young dictatorship, which seemed stable enough from the outside but actually was still in a process of fermentation, had seized full power over state and personal life, and it regarded this power as a real basis for the preparation of a total war. This basis would indeed have existed but for the dissipation, scarcely visible from the outside, of the forces which make up the war potential of a nation. So far as material resources were concerned there was no real concentration while in the psychological field the orientation of the people was so entirely one-sided, and consequently not comprehensive, that the national unity was endangered, and along with it the collective will to fight. The concurrent intensive efforts spent on the construction of autobahns, railway speed-coaches, party buildings, warships and fortifications, as well as on the persecution of the church, jews, intellectuals and scientists, all are examples of this dissipation or watering down of resources. The absolute power of the Party and its "big shots" was greater than the influence of reason and proper planning. The Wehrmacht, described as a pillar of the State, was given the honorable designation of "The Armed Guardian of the Nation" *, but very few in it realized how specifically restrictive this designation was, how it excluded the Wehrmacht from general political developments. Hitler boasted of having finally carried out in full Scharnhorst's idea of general conscription. At the same time, however, he created the concept

* Waffentraeger der Nation

of political troops for his party organizations and thereby a separate government for the soldier. This became the general rule in all fields and it led to an authoritarian anarchy instead of real government by a leader. There can be no doubt that the dictatorial form of government freed itself of all parliamentary difficulties which under another regime would have made the work more difficult. Also, it is beyond doubt that the one supreme power ruling in Germany was capable of cutting through difficult problems and facilitating work by means of quick decisions instead of long discussions. But the nature of these decisions was important, particularly in connection with the subject matter of this study.

First of all, there was the intense and never ending time pressure being exerted, which in a certain sense was quite logical but new demands were made before what had just been developed had had any chance at all to mature. The natural consequence was that training capacities and the possibilities of moral integration were over-strained and the materiel potentialities were overtaxed. Surprise, a healthy military principle, became bluff. The insecurity of the economic structure, whether in regard to food supply or the manufacture and procurement of basic materials, was similarly due to this time pressure. Foresight was turned into an assumption of unsecured possibilities. The specific military problems connected with the reorganization of the Wehrmacht therefore were not as thoroughly explored as could have been done with the singular opportunities presented by an entirely new establishment if the problem had been approached with more deliberation.

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Appendix 2

The unity of the Wehrmacht was again and again formally proclaimed, but at the same time the Luftwaffe was given a special position, resting more on personal and party-political motives than on objective considerations.

The importance of motorization was so greatly accentuated as to affect the personal life of the individual, but at the same time an old style of "playing at soldiering" comparable to that of King Frederic's time was instituted. It cannot be denied that the drive for motorization and the decision to build up a strong armored command originated with Hitler, of whom it must be admitted that he had a penchant for technical possibilities. Even in the professional circles concerned there were many who accepted these ideas with reluctance. It is to be regretted that no bold stroke was risked in the sphere of mechanization and motorization, and that time was wasted in unsatisfactory experiments with many models. On the other hand, it must be admitted that other countries tackled this problem with even greater hesitancy. The conclusions to be drawn from the experiences of World War I, which clearly pointed to the importance of technical science and materiel, were never fully reached. The theories of Douhet, Fuller and Seeckt, to mention but a few, were given only limited consideration. The race against time, the internal divergence between political and military leadership, the lack of clear objectives resulted in an interim solution, an improvisation. The result was a mass army, largely of infantry type, interspersed with armored units capable of operational employment, a horse-drawn army on modern motor highways, a Wehrmacht chiefly and abundantly supplied with

political ideologies and true dynamics in a time when materiel and technical science reigned supreme. No one who can even remotely conceive the problems which this combination of experience and fantasy created in a matter so important to the very life and existence of a people, will regard the above statements merely as an accusation. Developments do not progress in big strides, particularly when the practical testing of new ideas is restricted to brief periods of time, which follow each other only at long intervals, as is the case with wars.

2. The facts concerning the top-level organization at the time of the rearmament are familiar and have been reported upon by more competent persons. I will therefore confine myself to just a few critical observations. Quite apart from Hitler's personal inadequacies the concentration of Chief of State, political leader, and Commander in Chief of the Wehrmacht in one person, which perhaps in earlier times was considered an ideal combination, was bad in this era of specialization. No checks or balances were there. A united Wehrmacht did not exist. Both the Luftwaffe and the Navy very often went their own ways, even in minor matters concerning the possible joint development of new weapons. The Waffen-SS developed separately. A Wehrmacht General Staff was not created; the training establishment for this organization was shortsightedly throttled. A Reich's Council of Defense, which existed on paper, remained as ineffective as a similar Reich Cabinet. A war cabinet was never planned. The influence

of the Wehrmacht on the psychological preparation for war was too small. Within the Army High Command, the General Staff was overburdened. Parallel authorities made the work more difficult. Nevertheless, much was accomplished in spite of all.

V. Germany's Conduct of War in World War II.

1. Here again it cannot be the task of this study to draw a complete picture of Germany's conduct of war in World War II. All we need to consider here is whether or not the basic ideas of Germany's military leaders were taken into account and had any sort of influence. What has been said in the paragraphs above on rearmament, regarding the influence of Hitler's personality and dictatorship on politics, is even more applicable here. That government policy had to set the direction and the goal, assign strategy its missions and also exert a certain influence on operations remains true for World War II. But Moltke's warning that politics should not meddle with operations was more applicable than usual. It is not for us here to question whether our military leaders could or should have taken a firmer stand against the dictator's military dilettantism. A brief perusal of the reports of leading personalities from both sides suffices to show that the gap between the two could not be bridged.

The General Staff, having assessed the enemy's capabilities, warned from the very outset against the use of arms to solve any one of Germany's problems. The favorable outcome of the first brief campaigns seemed to

prove it wrong. For modern times this duel-like beginning of the war was a surprise, and, openly admitted, a political masterstroke of Hitler. The operational events of the first years of the war were also surprising. The speed with which German tanks reached Warsaw and Abbeville, their surprising performance in the mountainous regions of Macedonia and Greece, proved the protagonists of mechanization and motorization right in their concept of armor as a new operational means for obtaining quicker battle and campaign decisions. In the early days the performances of the German Luftwaffe also were sensational. Generals in the field inclined to the belief that this was another weapon capable of speeding up movement to the point where at times nothing but mopping-up operations would be left to the ground forces. New examples had been given of operating with the greatest possible speed and concentration. The Russian Campaign, in its first phase, produced gigantic battles of envelopment. The operational ability of German strategists had proved equal to the most modern requirements just as the moral forces had again proved their decisive value.

But when the real political bases of the war began to reveal themselves more and more threateningly, when more and more political misconceptions became apparent, — such as a false concept of Europe, an underestimation of Russia, a wrong evaluation of England's will to resist and of America's attitude, an overestimation of our Italian ally — strategy itself perforce ran into difficulties. What Moltke had said about strategy being a system of improvisations was misinterpreted. Improvisations are no expedients of long duration, nor replacements.

Improvising, which from the end of 1943 was raised to the position of a fundamental system, cannot be taken as a permanent basis without harmful effects. The war was allowed too wide a scope; political objectives were dictated by the exigencies of the moment; restraint was an unknown art.

When the war had passed its peak from the German point of view and only a complete political reorientation could have brought salvation the military leaders and their operations were made the scapegoats for the debacle. An obstinacy entered the picture which had nothing whatever in common with the underlying principles of German soldiering and leadership. The following points are mentioned as indicative of the general trend: the offensive at all costs rather than even a defensive improvisation; the stand-and-fight strategy rather than operational movement; the neglect of organization in depth in favor of linear fighting; a deliberate failure to provide sufficient reserves; the delusion that hedge-hog action pins down only enemy forces; and the complete misunderstanding of the operational significance of time and space. Engagements, battles, even campaigns, became isolated actions. The possibility of new technical developments offered temporary comfort, until it became clear here also that every advance forward must be followed by a holding action. Every measure taken was too late, whether it was of a strategic or organizational nature, whether it concerned the weakening economy or the mendacious propaganda. Brutal warfare took the place of actual total warfare.

All the conclusions drawn by great soldiers, all that had ever been taught by previous victories, was forgotten. There can scarcely be a better example for the fact that a bad policy cannot be saved even by good, let alone by poor, strategy, that the best operational skill cannot replace a shortage of basic materiels, that even the most determined human will cannot compensate for the lack of natural resources. It is really not merely a rejection of responsibility for annoying failures to maintain that Germany's field generals were not responsible for Germany's defeat, excepting in so far as they may have borne too patiently the nonsensical roles assigned to and forced upon them.

2. A glance at the top-level organization for the conduct of war will show that it did not greatly differ from that which was created at the start of the rearmament program, with the exception that new parallel authorities created out of mistrust only made the work more complicated. Instead of simplification there was fragmentation of authority, instead of collaboration there was a strict enforcement of Security Directive No1, which prevented one department from having any idea of what went on in the next, and which made all long-range planning impossible. There was no combined command of the coalition forces nor uniform treatment of the war fronts. Theater of war commanders plus the Wehrmacht High Command and the Army High Command made a rational adjustment of forces very difficult. The parallelization of Wehrmacht components, to which was added that of the SS, was

very great; not to mention the dissension between Wehrmacht and party. Moltke once wrote that only simplicity held out any hopes of success in war and called strategy "the application of common sense."

The practical lessons to be learned from a consideration of Germany's military conduct of the war will be discussed in detail later. The following is only a general and summary conclusion: The basic concepts stood the test of war. Where they were disavowed, this was due to the more or less guilty peculiarities of certain persons. No fundamental improvement of the basic concepts in the generally accepted sense is to be noted but rather an increased complication through specialization. Tradition, more sacred to the German than to most peoples, is of great advantage only when form and substance are clearly differentiated, but of disadvantage when it takes the place of creative imagination. There are no formulas for victory; systems are man-made, and there is no textbook for war. War remains a phenomenon of nature, changeable in form, with a character all its own; it is a realm of uncertainty, but also of foresight and boldness. It is subject to few laws, and a knowledge of those laws gives no assurance of victory. To ignore them, on the other hand, means to lose the war.

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R. Koch - Erpach

1 November 1948

Observations Relative to the Organization of the German Army's High Command

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Appendix 3

Observations Relative to the Organization of the German Army's High Command.

I. Basic Concepts.

Any consideration of the basic concepts of German military command organization cannot ignore the circumstances under which this command came into existence between the two world wars or the currents of thought that arose at the beginning of this period, in 1919. Particularly informative in respect to the origins is a survey in retrospect of the command circumstances with regard to Germany's allies and the conduct of war in the Near East - the latter also because of connections extending into World War II. The designations World War I and World War II have been kept in this study; future research will consider the two wars as an interconnected undertaking.

In the first study some of the basic influences of state organization upon military leadership have been considered. They again receive mention here because they affected the development of Germany's "post war" Army High Command until the Treaty of Versailles grafted upon this growing tree elements foreign to its nature. For even if the same thread can be traced through the western concept held by Prince Eugen, Jomini, Clausewitz, and Seeckt there still remains a historically proven difference between the Gallic and the Gothic conception of command authority which will be discussed later.

The themes of the first study, applicable also to this second, are as follows:

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1. Not individual dukes or nations fight the wars of our times but collective communities which find their ultimate reflection in their armed forces.

2. The head of the government determines the strategy, the commander of the military forces * the operation. The responsibilities must be clearly separated.

3. Stronger than the duty to serve is the honor of serving, which alone is capable of preventing unbounded warfare.

4. Mobilization and military training serve economic and defensive power equally.

5. The ethical idea, the national ideology, determines defensive strength.

6. The military service is responsible solely to the community it defends, and consequently stands apart from class or group politics.

7. The officers' corps, symbol of good order, leads through example and has a claim to respect. It molds and develops the leaders of the next generation.

8. The art of war and the actual conduct of war know but one objective: destruction of opposing forces. The "booty" of an armament policy can never be more than the consequence of this military objective.

But every attempt to put these principles into practice will fail if more than one of the basic ideas are disregarded, which the following consideration will bring out.

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* Author uses the term "connetable" the chief officer in former monarchic armies.

9. Nothing must be attempted without sufficient means; authority and command must be concentrated in one person. These precepts are the best guarantees of success.

a. Clausewitz.

The interpretation of war as a political instrument, as defined by Clausewitz, was generally accepted by the German General Staff, and the General Staff alone governed the psychological attitude of the army up till the end of World War I. In practice, however, two not very clearly defined interpretations existed. The one concerned the separation of competence, the other, more philosophical, and inseparably tied up with the first, concerned discipline, obedience. The matter of these two problems has been the subject of violent contention in recent times. It has been summed up in a nutshell in Battlefield Theory. (Vol. I, page 29)

The reports of Generals von Falkenhayn, Ludendorff, and von Seeckt give some information relative to the convictions prevailing among the leading military authorities. In the case of the book "Seeckt - the 1918-1936 Period of His Life" it must be observed that the publisher, as a pupil and follower of the general, arranged his compilation from the viewpoint which he held in common with the general. We cannot go into details here. In broad outline it may be stated that until November 1918 military leaders followed a common line, regardless of the differences in their personal character. Along this line the battlefield theory was not misconstrued or

questioned within the command itself or in the relations of the command with subordinate agencies. Outwardly, that is to say in their relations with political leadership, a very high sense of responsibility towards history, which, however, was not always entirely objective, allowed the delimitations of authority to remain in flux. This fluid state of affairs - and in this regard a study of the German command organization in the East would be very instructive - resulted in the following, as expressed in the above mentioned book:

"One of the greatest weaknesses was a duplication of effort, often even conflict, in the work of the various authorities. The highest offices, also the Prussian Ministry of War, stuck to their points of view even when these differed from the viewpoints of the on-the-spot observers. Constant blunders were the result."

Three conclusions may be drawn from the above:

1. The command organization cannot be simple enough, and the higher the level the smaller it should be.

2. Whoever carries the responsibility must also be free to choose his immediate assistants.

3. Only a system of assigned missions, not a specified command system, can adequately cope with the present multiplicity of means.

For two reasons, the one internal and the other external, the uniform thinking on strategy was split in two after November 1918, and along with it the officers' corps. The internal reason was the change in the structure of the State itself, the external one was the restraint

imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. From the point of view of time both were late-season blossoms and consequently unable to withstand rough weather, and not being a product of German soil but forced upon it they were by nature foreign to their surroundings. This is the origin of the lack of assurance and disunion in the officer's corps, elements which were there to stay. The pillar of support which right up to the bitter end prevented collapse and even made possible a measure of recovery, remained that of discipline. "Seeckt was a fanatic in the matter of discipline."

It was tragic that precisely this obedience should be shaken in the course of the establishment of the army, which process was already accompanied by so much conflict. It was as tragic as it was indicative, with regard to the matter about to be discussed that, owing to the exigencies of the time the scope of this obedience was never clearly deprived, and could not safely have been drawn. The consequence was that the interpretation of the nature of leadership in war continued to diverge from the clear logic of Clausewitz, and also that the latent conflict over the delimitation of authority and responsibilities within the government became aggrevated. Also the controversy existing since the time of Ludendorff regarding the employment of military forces, the priority between the means and the purpose in the conduct of war, and between the organization and utilization of war as a political instrument remained undecided.

General Ludendorff writes in his book: "Kriegfuehrung und Politik"

(The Conduct of War and Politics), that Clausewitz as the child of his time had not sufficiently shown "how much the potential strength of the army depended on the strength of the home country." Basing his arguments on the views of Count Schlieffen, Ludendorff concludes with the following inference:

"The sentence, 'War is the continuation of politics with other means' should read: 'War is external politics with other means', and should be supplemented with the sentence: 'However, politics taken as a whole must serve the ends of a war.' "

One may well wonder if Stalin would endorse this supposed need for a change in the theories of Clausewitz with a similar conclusion.

As the French say, the adjective is the enemy of the noun.

To differentiate between internal and external politics in this connection produces an apparent problem. As was shown subsequently the acceptance of the theories of Clausewitz began to weaken, although the basic idea, which saw a continuity between politics and the conduct of war, was still preserved. Names do not belong within the scope of these studies, for they concern themselves with facts and not with persons. Moreover, it will suffice to gain an insight if we give summarizing statements. The argument is therefore reduced to the two following quotations. The first points to the discrepancy in military thought which had come into existence, while the second, postulated by the Austrian General Staff, maintains the synthesis and at the same time makes necessary reference to the training of future officers. The first quotation reads as follows:

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"On the evening of 20 December 1918 a further political discussion took place in the General Staff. ..... On that day a new program was set up consisting of three stages. In the first place a governmental authority should be organized which would be capable of asserting itself. With the establishment of order there should then be a recovery of domestic economy. Only on the basis of the latter, and after many years, could the problem of the restoration of external power be tackled. Seeckt however, differing fundamentally from this view, maintained that governmental authority and internal order were self-evident. On the other hand he believed that there could be no restoration of domestic economy in a politically impotent country. For a country devoid of instruments of power it became a duty to organize its armed forces at least up to the point of becoming a desirable ally for another country.

"There can be no doubt that subsequent years proved Seeckt right. ..... What took effect was the military spirit, not so much as something concrete but rather as the incarnation of an idea."

The second passage reads as follows:

"War and politics are parts of a single contest. Politics are therefore subject to the same basic rules as war.

Only the media for carrying on the contest are different. Politics are in all their forms and variants nothing else than a struggle of conflicting interests. When this struggle, conducted through the means of speeches, meetings, notes, and conferences, cannot be held within these limits by the presence of a higher power, and no compromise appears possible, there must be a resort to force, to war or revolution. War as the supreme effort in the combined contest of war and politics calls for an unconditional integration of all forces available to the state. Only enthusiastic cooperation directed by a single will, can bring about maximum effort. This cooperation must be systematically prepared during a prolongued period of peace. Uniform action requires uniform leadership. ....

"But a complete understanding of the nature of this relationship between war and politics, which was so necessary, was lacking everywhere, among politicians, among army leaders, and in the monarch. A good state policy based on definite objectives and a firm conduct of war can only exist under a system of government which is healthily organized and rationally led.

"It is a remarkable fact that the command relationships of the Central Powers were organized in the most impracticable manner possible. (Note: Conditions at the

time of the creation of the Army High Command will be discussed later.)

"This state of affairs within the government had its natural repercussions also in the army. The generals of every army are the product of the state, of its relationships and principles, and consequently the ones it deserves."

The above sums up about everything that may be said on the relationship between war and politics as part of the ideological foundation of Germany's military command between the two wars. The formulations of Clausewitz always remained fundamental, and where these did not serve as light then they served as shadow, for groping around in. There is no real argument about Clausewitz, for his statements are not dogmas but definitions. The concepts of the nineteenth century which are inferred from them cannot be the concepts of 1918 or 1948, for they are subject to the change of circumstances. To Clausewitz politics were not a social form, not an interplay of opinions, but the art of the possible. Thus, the two quotations above are not at odds with each other but rather there are errors in comprehension. These errors also remain effective. To observe and consider these effects is the fruitful mission of historical investigation. The key to all historical research lies in the French saying: Je ne blame ni n'approve, je raconte. (I neither blame nor approve, I tell the story.)

b. Schlieffen

General von Seeckt wrote more than once on the subject of militarism. Nonetheless, the dangers of personal opinions in foreign policy remained unappreciated. A short essay entitled "Militarism Unmasked" was prepared in the Reichswehr Ministry in 1920, but it was not published.

In conformity with the Weimar Constitution political questions were not discussed in military circles. The General Staff in their deliberations lacked scientific training in the fields of sociology and psychology. The only thing that was clear was the front against mass psychology, against nihilism in every form. The wisdom of Kong-Fu-Tse in clarifying concepts did not come to the West. *

While the hitherto solid officers' corps was split as a consequence of the up-rooting of tradition by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and even the old traditional spirit of loyalty and honor could not prevent the splitting of the corps into two factions, one under Reinhardt and one under Seeckt, the solid front as far as concepts of strategy was concerned, was invulnerable. The "infantry signal to advance" and the Schlieffen theory guarded the fort.

Let there be no misunderstanding. It was indeed rare that in deliberations and resolutions relative to envelopment, breakthrough, attack, defense or holding tactics, decisions were rendered in favor of

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* The author no doubt is referring to Confucius' law of five moral relationships

the less daring method; but the Schlieffen theory was not so much a "Cannae" proposition as it was the principle of self-preservation in defiance of every power. It is hardly possible to state more beautifully or more clearly what Schlieffen meant to the German military man than with the following words taken from "Thoughts of a Soldier" (Gedanken eines Soldaten):

> "Count Schlieffen is not a concept but a living reality in the minds and hearts of the German General Staff, of the German soldier, and of the German people. We do not want to let him become fossilized into a concept, into a biased defender of a dogma, but rather would seek in him anew and refreshed the old and eternal rules of war.
>
> We may summarize these rules in three sentences:
>
> The destruction of the enemy is the objective of war, but this may be done in many ways.
>
> Every operation must be governed by one simple, clear idea, to which everything and everybody must submit.
>
> The decisive force must be employed at the decisive point. Success can only be obtained through sacrifice.
>
> If we take these precepts of Schlieffen to heart the Schlieffen concept will be the concept of victory."

There is one more point to which we must draw attention here. It was repeatedly made clear at the time that the word "destroy"

(vernichten) was not to be taken to mean annihilation or extermination. General Beck, Chief of Army General Staff, was trained in the art of psychological warfare, and endeavored to have the Rules of Land Warfare of the Hague Convention adopted for training in the military schools so that chivalry would be preserved in the conduct of war.

c. Total War.

In our search for the truth, the third great basic principle in military thought in that period was the concept of total war.

It must be pointed out here that a people living in poverty and under constraint reaches an endurable limit and becomes susceptible to radicalism, and that even an exaggerated and abstract democracy can slip into absolutism.

All monsters have a way of slipping in unobserved through backdoors, so it is not surprising that according to all indications the expression "total war" as first used in military literature came from Switzerland!

Another expression which came into use at about the same time was "war without mercy" (Krieg ohne Gnade). Obviously, in the present studies concerned with organizational delimitations, unconditional and unrestricted warfare cannot be meant.

What is referred to here as total war is Clausewitz' abstract concept of war within the limits prescribed by time and

space as applied to our times. With its excessive general conscription and its mass thinking, this applied concept admittedly tends toward "total" forms. In France, for instance, efforts were made as early as 1919 to increase defensive strength on a numerical basis, it is now said that the creation of a women's auxiliary officers' corps is being planned. This measure would exceed past practices in the conduct of war. In this connection one is inclined to see in the conduct of total war a summersault of the democratic idea. At any rate, our eyes are opened to see abysmal depths and the very real question presents itself to what limit the numerical increase of fighting forces with the accompanying multiplication of supply troops and rear services is worth the effort. From the strategic point of view the question also must be asked whether mobility, the element so important to successful warfare and organization, can still be guaranteed.

Along this line of thought it remains regrettable in recent times and injurious to democratic mobilization and strategy that all the principle concepts have not been clarified internationally and that there is no sharp differentiation between the exigencies of war and unrestricted violence. At any rate, no weak point, no Achilles' heel, must be allowed to exist in the national defense and in the military code of honor. The vulnerable point is present today if "viribus unitis" and terrorism are both called militarism, and this weak point is apt to make a mockery of the sacrifices brought in a war. The latest edition of the American College Dictionary published

by Random House, gives as definition 2 of militarism: "the principle of maintaining a large military establishment", and as definition 3: "the tendency to regard military efficiency as the supreme ideal of the state, and to subordinate all other interests to those of the military". Soldiering and the will to serve in the defense of ones country are thus shown in an entirely false light.

In view of the lack of clear concepts, a circumstance that cannot be repeated often enough, the transition of the concept of total warfare into reality during the period from Ludendorff to Hitler also was subject to a great variety of interpretations. Under Ludendorff the delimitation of authority was ignored, under Hitler such a delimitation was made impossible by the chaotic conditions in the command organization, so that in the creation of the Army High Command the concept of total war only played a secondary role. As a reaction to Polish and French measures at the end of World War I it did receive some theoretical attention, but owing to the exigencies of the time and later owing to the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles, no preparatory measures were possible. What was militarily possible in spite of defeat (to show the Schlieffen spirit and to keep it alive in the attacks on the Windau River in March 1919) only began to take shape again with the introduction of armament parity and with the Geneva conferences.

However, as a measure of protection against all forms of anarchy and as a cure for a sick and starving nation, a peacetime mission

remained as a guiding principle for the Army High Command and its precursors: the implementation of a program of universal training. Such a program would be the expression of the collective national will, struggling towards one goal. This principle was reflected in the determination of the Chief of the Army High Command to hold the officers' corps together, who said, "Our officers' corps is suffering from uncertainty, not only from external, but also and even particularly so, from psychological uncertainty. We shall not be able to weather the storms of our time if we do not succeed in becoming and remaining united."

The following paragraphs will try to show why we did not succeed in spite of a good beginning and how this failure was due to outside influence and later to internal malice and squabbling.

It must not be forgotten that total warfare requires very sharply drawn limits and a firm philosophy in order not to drift into the illimitable wastes of the hybris.* Voices were raised in warning and they were not entirely unheard.

Properly understood total warfare has nothing to to with militarism. From the military point of view it is the concentration of all available strength upon the strategic objective set by political leadership. As such it is by no means a matter of a purely mathematical solution to a statistical census problem of manpower. It is primarily an ethical and social question, the result of the ruling philosophy and of the national morale.

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* The state of mind in which man forgets human limitations, deeming himself the equal of the gods. (Greek mythology.)

For a regime which regards war and peace as different stages in one and the same social struggle for existence, and which, understanding the basic concepts of total warfare, would avoid ambiguous catch-words, it would be well to establish chairs of military instruction in our colleges. The Berlin Academy of Political Science made a tentative start in this direction which was fully approved by the leaders of military affairs. Total warfare also requires an unequivocally clear political language. The magazine "Die Wirklichkeit" which appeared during the first world war and which was stupidly forbidden towards the end of 1917 drew timely attention to considerations of this sort. The latent divergence of opinion in the officers' corps and among military leaders referred to above, sharpened by the activities of the "Freikorps",* by the publicity regarding the schwarze Reichswehr **, the Stahlhelm ***, and other para and pseudo-military creations, and by the pressure of a prudishly moralising control, kept military leaders constantly on the alert.

Nevertheless, neither the concept of total war nor the decisive significance of the moral element in the philosophy of both the Wehrmacht and the State, could be stressed as much as necessary. For that purpose time was lacking, perhaps also the sense of timeliness. The result of wartime demands for action and preventive quick decisions

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* Independent bodies of volunteers, formed after World War I without government control.

** Secret Reichswehr. Troops which allegedly were trained over and above the 100,000-man army, the Reichswehr, Germany was permitted to maintain under the Treaty of Versailles.

*** German War Veteran Union after World War I; a para-military organization.

was that even after the war "time", in which men thought of making, and did make, history, was, in the western way of doing things, a sort of straight line into infinity along which command, prescribed order, and law were to be joined together inch by inch. In this process individual energies were excessively taxed and misused. The quiet composure of the eastern mind and its concept of time, where the linking together is in closed circles, where movement is not replaced by speed, and where, protected within its circular encampment, freedom of action is maintained, was unknown in Germany.

Total war is a pearl necklace of selected measures strung along a strong line of conduct.

The recruiting and replacement administration was handled in an even more impersonal manner, following the same errors as the science of psycho-technology, which had drifted away from its originally intended simplicity. The same applies to the "Bevoelkerungspolitik", the policy which strove to increase the national birth rate. Not that the personal and human element behind the statistics had been forgotten or neglected - on the contrary. But the constraint which dominated the scene was, often inescapably, ignored under the pressure of the times. The conduct of total war, and that within well defined limits, can be based on nothing but the will to fight. The purely mechanical increase in armament or in fighting forces, whether through an increase in personnel or through the perfection of material, will not lead to victory without this clear will to fight. This readiness to bear arms grows or deteriorates in the course of generations, in the daily talk

of a nation, and its parliaments. Statistics with all their charts and diagrams remain superficial; what goes on below the surface is explained in the following passage. It is but an example, but its conclusions can serve as a basis for many arguments. In view of the shortage of sources of information one may wonder what part considerations of this sort played or could have played in the Army High Command and its predecessors. Hitler himself never considered total warfare as a principle or an objective. In any case the passage reads as follows:

> "Based on the rhythm of population renewal each span of about thirty years is called a generation. This is a rather rough division. It disregards the amazing pliancy of human beings in the second decade of their life and along with it the influence of environments on each individual. If both are evaluated as factors which are effective in forming or distinguishing generations we obtain, for Germany at least, something like the following groupings:
>
> The war-veteran generation, those born between 1890 and 1899, the wartime youth generation, those born between 1900 and 1909, and the postwar generation, those born in 1910 and subsequent years.
>
> The war-veteran generation was the most decimated and by 1925 consisted of four and a half million men. This "tragic generation" supplied the men for the

"Freikorps"*, the "Stahlhelm",** and similar contemporary organizations. The Weimar Republic had nothing to offer to these young men and consequently antagonized the entire war-veteran generation.

The wartime youth generation, while without active service, experienced the war on the home-front, helped collect money, collected leaves for use as hay, went short of food, enjoyed special school holidays to celebrate a victory or to save coal, became interested in social, economic, and international affairs, lived through the years of the inflation, and was personally affected by the problems of the State. It experienced the impact of 1914, 1918, and 1923, of the mark revaluation, of unemployment, and acquired a sober objectiveness of thought and action. With its strength of 6,300,000 it was the strongest "generation". Its numbers have been seriously depleted by World War II.

For the most part the postwar generation grew up with automobiles and sport. World War II called upon it for the greatest sacrifices.

The average age of the members of the Baden-Wuerttemberg Landtag (legislative assembly) in 1947 was around 55.

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* See page 109
** See page 109

The situation in other German assemblies is surprisingly similar. Most delegates belonged to the war-veteran generation, while the numerically strongest wartime youth generation, born between 1900 and 1909, had the weakest representation."

It is clear from the above that a total psychological mobilization of the nation as a precondition of maximum military effectiveness and performance, or, in other words, conduct of total war, depends on national representation as well as on pre-military training. Neither of these two factors was available to the Army High Command.

If one would put the three basic principles discussed above into a nutshell, one might put it this way:

Clausewitz: War is not an independent undertaking but one of the aspects of life itself.

Schlieffen: No pat recipe for a Cannae * operation, but tactics as an expression of the character of the commander.

Total war: Not an all-out war without limits, but a unanimous and patriotic will to bear arms.

The essence, the limits, and the nature of these three concepts were not fully recognized in the chaos of the changing times.

Tentative approaches to these problems by high authorities were admittedly often in evidence. We may recall, for instance, the series

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* Hannibal's victory over the Romans at Cannae in 216 B.C. is generally regarded by German military students as the classical example of a battle of envelopment and annihilation.

of lectures at the Reichswehr * Ministry — such as those of Otto Hoetzsch of the Academy of Political Science and the work of smaller circles. We may also recall the Reichswehr Committee, the citizen defense organizations and the district commissioners out of whose organizations "... there arose a frame-work which at least kept alive the defense idea, the first beginnings of a reserve officers' corps, of a frontier defense and what later became an army reserve organization." But all this remained rudimentary and was soon overshadowed by a high-pitched sense of national duty which weathered all storms, and by example led the people to unexpected performances and yet had to fail because it continuously crucified itself. The first Chief of the Army High Command did his work because there was a constitution, the second not because but rather in spite of the existence of a constitution. It is not possible to wage or prepare for a total war when the president and the commander of the armed forces are in disagreement. There was no solution to the problem.

The conduct of and mobilization for total war require as a precondition a personnel policy which is homogeneous for both state and army leadership. Since organizational solutions, however flexible, should not be made to fit a special person or circumstance but rather be tailored for normal use, it follows logically that a workable top-level organization absolutely must have a personnel office on a level above all other departments, which stands immediately at the side of

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* Reichswehr. The 100,000-man army Germany was allowed to maintain after World War I.

the representative of supreme authority. For men make history, or total war, only when they are of one mind.

Men are responsible for total war. The Army High Command did not fully recognize the significance of the concept of total war. The man who paved the way for the Army High Command and held the reins for six years was General von Seeckt. The question therefore arises whether Seeckt did not recognize the full significance of the concept of total war.

Justice requires a further test: Did his wishes and his course coincide? Or did the obstacle toward a well recognized objective lie only in the limitations to his field of operation.

Two questions are here pertinent:

1. What is total war and what is its value?

2. Did Seeckt see the light, but not the way, or did he see the way, but not the light?

The first question cannot be answered as conclusively as one might think. The Hitler-Goebbels divagation from total war, taken up and perpetuated by laymen, has brought everything into confusion. The patriotic sense of duty and readiness to serve has already been mentioned as the basic element in the conduct and preparation for total war. Also touched upon has been the dubious value of a numerical mania which conceives of totality as an unlimited massing of men and materiel. As generally understood today total war means numbers and still greater numbers — women in uniform, foreign legions, supplies,

budgets, standardization of weapons and the resurrection of Montecucolli with his cry of money, money, and more money. But tomorrow, total war will mean movement, organization, purpose, courage, and genius, genius and more genius.

But let General von Seeckt speak for himself:

"The following statements render nothing more than my personal opinion, free of all reference, even to my own past. They disregard the situation as it exists in the German Reichswehr as well as the shackles of the "Dictate of Versailles".

Briefly stated I see future wars fought with highly trained, mobile and therefore small armies (only ground forces are here referred to) whose effectiveness will be greatly increased through the airforce, along with a simultaneous preparation of the entire combat strength either to support the attack or to sacrifice itself in the defense of the Fatherland. The peacetime army, which might also be called an operational army, will consist as far as possible of volunteers. It should at least provide security against a surprise attack, and consist of three essentials: great mobility, most effective weapons, and continuous replacements.

Beside this army there will be a training cadre with schools through which the entire able-bodied youth of the country will pass. To make this short training period

worth while, a youth-training program is essential, with emphasis on general physical training and psychological indoctrination.

The smaller the army, the easier it will be to supply it with modern weapons, whereas the constant maintenance of up-to-date weapons for millions is becoming an impossibility. The arming of the population must be organized on entirely new lines if we accept the justified conclusion that these masses, because of their scant military training, are all the more in need of material support. There is but one way to arm masses: decide on the type of weapon and prepare for mass-production in case of need. If the military in their material demands will forego all too great perfection in favor of the greatest practicable measure of simplicity the lapse of time between the placement of orders and delivery can be shortened.

The effect of the attacker's successes against enemy potentials will depend on the defender's moral strength in resisting. Perhaps the principle of the general call to arms is already on the decline, the mania for numbers coming to an end. Mass armies are becoming immovable, they can no longer maneuver or win victories, they can only crush.

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If we accept as sincere the general demand for peace then the present military organizations are not an unsurmountable contradiction, provided we hold to the opinion that mass peacetime armies are the real menace to peace.

Within the concept "war" lies the contest between man and materiel. Technical science works on both sides. Consequently it is quite wrong to speak of a victory of materiel over man. Materiel has won out over the masses but not over man himself, and never will, since it comes to life only in the hands of men. The fault lies therein that an immovable and almost defenseless human mass is exposed to the brutal effect of materiel. The more we increase the fighting mass, the surer is the victory of materiel; for its power reaches further than that of the largest human reservoir. So there remains only the struggle between man's mind and inanimate materiel.

Destruction of enemy forces, not destruction of the country, still remains the first rule in the art of war, notwithstanding apparent exceptions. Materiel is superior to the mortal masses, not to the living and immortal human soul."

What remains? One must admit that the basic concepts applicable in organizing a national defense in keeping with the times were known

to the chiefs of the Army High Command. Inherent and external constraints, however, destroyed in their very inception all efforts to translate these concepts into practice. In the conflict between the will and the means the foundations crumbled. Neither space nor time were sufficient for the problem and rendered it unsolvable. Many ways could have led to the goal, but the political powers would not allow the use of any one of them.

II. Basic Concepts Relative to Technical Developments.

1. The Period Between 1919 and 1935, Armament Parity, and Agreement.

a. The "Case of the poor man" which Germany was compelled to plead from 1914 onward, and the role of a "besieged fortress" into which it had slipped, led to controls in industry and in life, which through lack of preparation brought about a shift of responsibilities. The natural relationship between politics and the conduct of war, in which the statesman determines the strategic objective, had changed, the emphasis having shifted from a weak political leadership to a strong military leadership, which latter, even after the war, continued to enjoy the confidence of the people in a measure equal to the distrust the people had for the government and the political parties. The troubles of the time — soldiers' councils, the blockade, frontier strife, and so forth — delayed and prevented a settling of these problems. In the field of politics, of industry, as well as in the military sphere, it was a twilight period. The old * and later the new Army High Command, constantly steered a course between Scylla and Charibdis.

Rich in manpower but poor in raw materials, borne along by the incomparable performance of its infantry, Germany was compelled to adopt methods of combat which left in their wake the idea of a mass army, consisting almost entirely of infantry, as the desirable objective. The disinclination to burden the budget with military expenses worked to the same end. Nowhere was there any sign of a public opinion comparable,

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* "Heeresleitung" as the Army High Command was formerly designated.

for example, to that expressed currently in the Swiss press in the following words:

> "A war brings very heavy burdens. In the willingness to face up to these, lies the first condition for overcoming them. It is therefore wrong to economize on national defense, or to make preparedness all too easy for the individual. Only those things which are costly are valuable. Quite apart from the military inadequacy of a small professional army, its introduction would result in a rapid disappearance of the willingness to bear arms, in a devaluation of the love of liberty, and consequently also in a decline of the true spirit of democracy."

From a purely military point of view it may be said that scientific exploration had run aground in gas warfare. After the first successes due to surprise no change in the course of the war was to be expected from this side. (A parallel might be drawn for the atom bomb.) The air force and the armored command, both admittedly costly and requiring years of development, were still in their infancy.

A systematic and thorough analysis of the war's lessons, as well as any well planned army organization was forbidden. The need of a link between East and West (the first Chief of the Army Command was convinced that the difference between East and West was greater than the difference between North and South within Germany), which was emphasized particularly from the economic angle in professional publications

relative to the "Russo-German bridge" in connection with the conduct of a total war, presented more pressing problems. But here, contrary to all expectations, the restrictions of the Versailles Treaty proved helpful.

Strictly speaking, the idea of mass armies went back, in Germany as well as in France, to pre-war times, beginning around 1900. In Germany the idea of "a nation in arms" was propounded by men like von der Goltz, von Bernhardi, von Falkenhausen, and others. All the more remarkable is the above presentation by General von Seeckt, who also called for total war and military training for all able-bodied men, but not for a mass army, although he did demand a large cavalry force, a demand typical of that pause in the march of progress which is inherent to every human life.

In starving postwar Germany it was inevitable that total war should be considered primarily as an economic war. Thus J. Schmitt wrote in 1935:

> "Even in the 18th century industry played only a very indirect part in the conduct of war. ... Only the transformation of the civil, national state and of the liberalistic economic order led to that totality of war which saw its beginnings in the World War. This trend is reflected in all states in an intensive preparation for total war in the form of a total mobilisation of resources. It extends," he continues, however, "to every sphere of life,

thus, not to armament and industry alone, but also to political and moral education. ... But," he goes on to say in contradiction to the practices of World Wars I and II, "every individual can only serve its ends in his own way. It would be absolutely wrong to set an ideal of war economy against an ideal of peace economy and to develop the industrial mobilization accordingly."

The more commonly accepted concept of total war and mass armies is that of General von Kuhl who in April 1924 said that

"New weapons and technical inventions call for new tactics. This is what Napoleon had in mind when he said that tactics should be changed every ten years.

The surprises which the World War brought us are still remembered by all. When we try to raise the veil covering the picture of future warfare we are compelled to begin with the experiences of the world war. Tanks appeared as a surprise for the first time in September 1916, in the Battle of the Somme. These combat cars climbed over trenches and crushed barbed-wire entanglements. They thus represented a sort of armored infantry designed to pave the way for infantry. In foreign armies the science of technology is striving to increase the speed of tanks so that these may also follow cavalry. (In this respect the parallelization of

speed and maneuverability and the constant confusion of these two terms in literature and official terminology should be noted.)

At the end of the World War almost half the German airplanes were engaged in reconnaissance. Of the remainder, most were intended as fighters, leaving only a few for attack on ground objectives. The English expert, General Groves, declared: 'In the next war there will be no sparing of the civilian population. In the future the home country's capacity to offer moral resistance therefore will be very important. As the French trench fighters used to say: "pourvu que les civils tiennent" (if only the civilians will hold out).'

Be that as it may, all machines have their limitations. It will ever be left to man to carry the principle burden of fighting. His state of mind and moral strength remain determining factors. Let us not forget what Scharnhorst said in 1806: 'We have begun to place the art of war higher than the military virtues.' That has been the downfall of nations throughout the ages. If man thus maintains his decisive significance the question arises whether the next war will again be waged with mass armies.

General von Freytag-Loringhoven has expressed the view that the World War signified the end of war with mass armies. But as far as it is humanly possible to foresee,

victory still remains with the 'big battalions'. The time does not seem to have arrived as yet in which 'armies of millions' are obsolete. The machine has not yet killed the mania for numbers, nor has it displaced mass armies."

It is clear from the above that opinion favored the idea of mass armies, with the emphasis on infantry, and that the decisive historical influence of irrational forces was nowhere taken into consideration. Long-range planning was completely crowded out by the problems of the moment. More haste, less speed. And yet the prophets crying in the wilderness was not altogether absent. Friedrich Naumann's book "Central Europe" (Mitteleuropa) had appeared as early as 1915. There one could read:

"The spirit of supranational organization has taken hold of politics. We are beginning to think in continents, as Cecil Rhodes expressed it. A country which wants to stand alone will nevertheless become dependent on the changing situations of the great powers. This is a consequence of the age of transportation as well as of centralized army technique (zentrale Technik des Heeres). For this coming era of united nations Germany is too small. No such single state can sustain a world war. That is all over.

Understanding is the voluntary acceptance of a recognized necessity. If we think beyond the present,

the organization of a Central European army statute will be recognized as a necessity. It would have to be so set up that a clear distinction would be made between the general military obligations of the allied states, which obligations must be alike for all members of the union, and the special and sovereign rights of the individual states.

The mutual army is the natural outcome of the concept of an international sphere of economy. From the moment such a sphere is to be created it must be a closed defensive unit, with a corresponding constitution. Therein lies for all member states a limitation of their own political interests, for they renounce the right of conducting a war on their own account. Nor can they any longer be attacked separately. The member states within the military union enjoy its protection.

In regard to organization, formation, training, cost, and mobilization procedures, there must be complete agreement. The Commander in Chief of the confederate forces has the right and the duty of convincing himself of this complete unanimity and of complete fulfillment of obligations. (Treaty of the Reich with Bavaria, 23 Nov 1870.)"

b. It would be wrong and unfair to judge the people of one era by the standards of another, or to hold the General Staff or Army High Command responsible for measures which were conditioned by the times. Precisely for this reason it is necessary to preface our consideration of the work of the Army High Command within the period mentioned by a consideration of the times themselves. Also one must understand completely the full significance of the power and unpredictability of irrational forces. What appears on the surface — and this applies to military affairs — is the open manifestation of the internal state of affairs. A superstitious faith in technical inventions, a penchant for biased and short-sighted professionalism made the times sterile; the armament program lacked that creative spirit which, precisely because of this compulsory fresh start, could have led to the breaking of new trails. The members of the 100,000 "officer" army were mere puppets; the defense idea did not well forth as an expression of free will; the authority of the Army High Command was shackled and under suspicion. An Italian minister in 1919 coined the phrase: "The next war will be a war of organization. Organization does have its limits, but it will not tolerate shackles."

Neither the basic principle of not serving two masters, nor the precept relative to not starting anything without adequate means, could be observed in practice. The idea of self-defense was influenced by the times and it readily became mixed up with the spirit of aggression.

More and more it was realized that besides the creatively planned

delaying battle as part of an operation there was the local delaying action at top level.

The top-leveled organization was the center of heated controversy. In Part 3 of this work, the various possible solutions as examined, planned, or realized, will be gone into further. The struggle never led to the desired objective. The transfer of the various ministries of war as well as of the wartime Army High Command (OHL) to a unified Reichswehr Office was not effected until October 1919, and even then not in a form that would allow an unhampered and constructive transformation of the confederate military forces of imperial Germany into a really new instrument.

So far as the political purpose of the new Wehrmacht was concerned this purpose had yet to be made clear to the struggling member states of the young Republic; at least in so far as discussion was not made superfluous by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The political and military anachronism of these shackles sufficiently explains why the work of the Army High Command had to remain rudimentary.

It would go beyond the scope of this work to examine how far the views on the nature of the next war -- war of movement or of position-- or on the type and value of national fortifications influenced or could influence the formation of the new Wehrmacht. But two basic concepts moved dominantly into the foreground. The economic disorder of the Reich and the still threatened frontiers left no room for any other

consideration than that of national defense, perhaps on two fronts. And if the spirit of the army, having survived the collapse, was to fill the new form as it once had filled the victorious old form, then it was necessary to maintain firm discipline and to eradicate as soon as possible every form of particularism in politics among the officers and the Freikorps.

To ascertain anything statistically was hardly possible, nor was it feasible or permissible to take any measures regarding mobilization. A strategic objective was lacking. Consequently one might say that the work began in a vacuum. The operation set its demands, let the organization take care of the business of fulfilling them. No change had taken place in this primogeniture of strategy. The pride of having been "unconquered on the field of battle" prevented a severe inquiry into the causes of defeat.

Though two trends of thought were represented in the officers' corps, which might non-politically be separated into a group which intelligently accepted the new form of government and all that went with it, and another group which accepted the new form of government for emotional reasons. There were nevertheless no conflicting opinions on military matters. We must beware of drawing wrong conclusions from the biographical book on Seeckt already referred to. (Seeckt. Aus seinem Leben, 1918/1936). The first and the second Army Commands of the 1919/1926 period were in complete agreement on principles. Particularly the idea of voluntary service (yeomanry, militia, regular service, and so forth),

as also the idea of physical and mental training for the entire nation — a boy-scout type of training without weapons — were equally accepted and approved. If in spite of this the development of national rearmament and conscription tended to be orientated backward to Scharnhorst rather than forward in the direction of service with honor this was due to the barriers imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, and no less to the "president's" failure to set strategic objectives.

The dissolution of the Freikorps, because they made special demands for themselves, had drawn attention to the fact that volunteer units easily become mercenary troops, despised as idlers in uniform who cause higher taxation for no good purpose. It could only have been otherwise if a genuine will to serve had been current among the people, and the nature of service, training, equipment, billeting and maintenance was such that the system was harmoniously incorporated in the community and its economy. But by the end of 1919 (the times given may sometimes be wrong because of the lack of documentation) a compulsory labor service following the Bulgarian model was under consideration. Schill was not a recognized model! *

A big disadvantage was the absence of a Wehrmacht personnel office, and the fact that the Organizational Branch initially was separate from and had little contact with the Reichswehr Committee, and later, though

* Ferdinand Schill, a Prussian officer, who in 1809 on his own initiative attacked the French with his regiment in order to set an example for the Army.

set up as part of the Troops Office, * was overburdened with routine matters. In the profound confusion of duplications of efforts in the top-level departments a central coordinating authority was missing. Arbitration between the Army and the Navy concerning their special demands, and between the field army and the administration took up precious time, lost itself in personnel demands, and never led to a clear-cut solution in the sense that the Commander in Chief was free to hold all controls without hindrance.

The prohibition of the General Staff constantly threw sand into the gears. The restraint embodied in this prohibition nullified the best efforts, made a clear command organization and clearly defined responsibilities impossible. This restraint constantly produced distrust, both internally and externally, and in the end boomeranged back on those who had instituted it and who themselves had dislocated the very lever which they could have controlled. (Reference is made to those who drafted the Treaty of Versailles) Leadership there had to be, and it could only be fashioned intellectually, no matter whether the command organization was a General Staff or an adjutant's office.

In the creation of the 100,000-man army a further decisive error was made very soon. Partly as a result of the perhaps subconscious influence of the catchphrase concerning a General Staff without front-line experience, but due primarily to the unbroken bonds of comradeship, the straitened circumstances of candidates were taken into consideration along with their character and knowledge during the numerical reduction of the officers' corps. A worthy error, but nevertheless an

* Later became Army General Staff

error in so far as it frequently led to faulty appointments and to the fact that the right man for the job was not chosen.

But all considerations and intentions were transcended by the idea of national defense. The possibilities of frontier violations in the East and in the West, the flaring up of Communist insurrections in the Ruhr, in Upper Silesia, in Bavaria, or central Germany, called for the immediate formation of organized units ready for action. There simply was no leisure time in which to reflect further on wartime experiences, or to train a new corps of officers. What the war had left intact, namely the infantry — the queen of battle — and pre-war officers of the imperial era, had to be thrown into the battle and strife of the day. Recruiting offices had been closed, their records burned; only rough estimates could be made of the numerical strength of available age-groups, and it was easy to foresee the day on which the potential reserve of trained men would be exhausted and the rifles scattered around the country would become rusty and outmoded. The inexorableness of these calculations compelled a progressive reduction in national forces. Half by desire and half under compulsion came the transition from the desired army for two front protection to the little "model army".

It is not possible without the support of documents or file of orders, merely from publications, often biased of a professional or biographical nature, to consider the pros and cons of projects, plans, abstract considerations and practical measures. The transition from what was available in 1919 to the ultimate form and than again to the

"final form" of a national army, was subject to many changes.

On 24 November 1919, General von Seeckt was made Chief of the Troop Office, and on 5 June 1920, he was made Chief of the Army Command. On 15 May 1920 the 200,000-man army was completely organized and in October 1926 von Seeckt resigned his office.

Problems of transition, of army reorganization, and of national defense had been in the forefront of consideration in the first years, but with the increase in internal stability the emphasis in organizational work began to shift to the problem of increasing the readiness and striking power of the army, naturally in conjunction with the endeavors being made in Geneva toward equalization of armaments. The defense idea remained and furthermore motorization of the army could not be ignored any longer.

c. The coming influence of the internal combustion engine first made itself felt in the sphere of aviation. The 100,000-man army had none. The Army High Command under von Seeckt had eyes not for what was, but for what should be. The task was to lay the foundations for the rebirth of a Luftwaffe and to keep army units informed of aviation progress as pertains to them. This included knowledge of aviation and its influence on the command and the combat activities of ground forces. Lectures on aviation, air warfare games were the result, using dummies representing planes and antiaircraft weapons. On 1 January 1923, Germany had regained its sovereign rights in the air. But under the name of "definitions" new shackles were immediately imposed

upon German aviation. Only after prolongued negotiations and the Paris air agreement of 1926 were these restrictions dropped and therewith the surveillance and restrictions on airplane construction.

Strictly speaking, all this is beyond the scope of this study. It is included, however, to show how tedious were the preliminaries to creative and free organization and how variegated the struggle. The fact that the problems of aviation and of the Luftwaffe for a long time took precedance in the general program of motorization, and that the problems connected with the motorization of the army could not be freely and thoroughly explored and coordinated, should already be obvious from this short discourse on aviation. Within the compass given, neither time, means, nor leadership were adequate; it transcended the strength of the Army High Command to evaluate the various and often conflicting demands made, and to produce the best.

To this must be added that the leading men, whose hearts still belonged to the world as it had been when they had been in their prime, were able to comprehend the transition from the horse to the motor but could not quite accept it completely. The idea of motorization long remained restricted to the category of supplies, while the role of the cavalry continued to be overrated, and highly regarded for its speed, mobility and visibility. The struggle for oil was also partly responsible, right down to 1933, for the fact that motorization of the army was carried out only hesitantly.

Only gradually a motor transport inspectorate developed from the inspectorate for transportation. Both were joined together at first

and later were separated and made independent. Perhaps it would have been better if the joint inspectorate for cavalry and motorized transportation, as contemplated as late as 1934, had been put into effect right at the beginning; and later it would also, perhaps have been more useful, to establish a joint inspectorate for tank and antitank units. Also the war experiences of World War I were rather meager, and it had always been customary to build up from these war experiences instead of considering war experiences and future aims as equally important in the setting of objectives. Worst of all was the lack of possibilities for carrying out practical experiments of any sort on the home ground. It was of course economical to be spared the cost of development, to pick the ripe fruit from foreign trees, so to speak. But the technical and tactical experience which is derived from the development of a weapon cannot be brought home in full measure by military observers sent abroad or even by special expeditionary forces that participate in actual war. * Not all is luxury that is superfluous. The art of leadership, even in the organizational sense, needs workaday experience and scientific knowledge.

2. The 1929-1935 Period -- Armament

It is no slip of the pen if we speak here of the 1929/35 period after discussing the 1919/33 period. No clear dividing line can be drawn between the period of armament parity -- during which emphasis was on

* Author is no doubt alluding to the German Expeditionary Force sent to Spain during the Spanish Civil War in 1937/38. (Reviewer)

the maintenance of the defensive spirit and of international respect and on an armament program by which Germany sought to prove her worth as an ally and which aimed at freedom in the technological development of her limited forces --, and the period of the rearmament program -- which, disregarding competent advice, foolishly went in the water way over its head.

From the very nature of things it was probably in the Navy that the ball was first set rolling. The Luftwaffe followed, though at first only theoretically. Motorization of the army muddled along until just as Pallas sprang fully armed from the forehead of Zeus the German mechanized army, influenced by the Englishman Fuller and other foreign voices suddenly materialized. Here again there were many obstacles, rivalries and shortages of equipment to contend with before the first tanks were rolling along. The actual sequence of events is of no significance for the present studies. It suffices to establish the fact that the Army High Command understood the signs of the times, and ignoring all external and internal obstruction, found ways and means, through improvisations à la Moltke, of seizing what was necessary. And yet the patch-work organization that came into being, and which could never have been anything else, cannot be called an improvisation. Organization, generally speaking, is the art of welding together as a whole whatever naturally belongs together in time, space, and means. Improvisations, or one might say makeshift measures, as understood by Moltke, are of short duration, being terminated by a change in the situation. They cannot be brought into being by an order; they must result

from the creative imagination of the troops.

Planning requires time, both for the drafting and for the execution of the plans. Lack of time may rob the plan of coherence. Opposition, or the lack of a broad, uniform concept, can just as easily produce a failure as can mistakes or material deficiencies; the establishment was nonetheless organized. Whether it had developed organically or not is easy enough to ask when things have gone wrong.

To return to the tank strategy referred to above, it is a regretable fact that the initial development of the "Panzer idea" had lagged because of the lack of foresight of the leading military men. It could not be otherwise. The great leaders remained geniuses at composition. But all efforts on the part of the Army High Command to create a new Wehrmacht, precisely with the object of becoming a worthwhile ally, the goal of interdependence, in short, the effort to obtain a European Union with the simplest and most inexpensive means, were constantly annulled and shattered. The defense-mindedness of the nation had lagged behind developments, indeed had been led into false channels through the pseudo-military trends in defense politics.

In spite of everything, the Army High Command did all that lay in its power to change the trenchtype infantry army into a maneuverable mechanized army.

3. The Period from 1935 Onward -- Rearmament

The time from 1935 on, the time of recognized independence in defense matters, is regarded as the time of rearmament and the

rebirth of aggressive spirit. It is now proven that such a characterization is false if it is taken to include the Army High Command. But political events are unimportant here. It suffices to make brief reference to the technical influences and the basic developments up to the beginning of World War II. The following may be considered a brief summary of the subject:

a. The military developments and measures of the Army High Command cannot be torn out of their historical background. Such a procedure would lead to false conclusions. Influences such as those of the Grand Army of the Republic, or those of the Stahlhelm * or SA ** can affect the course of events long after they have ceased to exist. In the introduction it was pointed out that war and military history treated alone remains unfruitful. A general study would have to include a lot of chaff. It is not global politics to send German waiters to London, to make consuls of business representatives, or to "launch a broad attack upon the Indian Empire with a holy war and two machine guns." But in the absence of a strategic objective, such measures may throw some light on politics. Here it must suffice to keep the following three points in mind:

(1) The Army High Command and the motorization program were subjected to unauthorized and incompetent influences.

(2) The build-up of a Wehrmacht inspired by a unanimous will to serve was doomed to failure because of the existence of pseudo-military organizations. These were to the Army High

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* German veterans' union after World War I.

** Storm trooper detachments of the National Socialist Party.

Command what water is to fire.

(3) The Army High Command was overwhelmed by the tempo of rearmament. The pace set by the war, plus the constant struggle for political power not to mention the political trends as well as in consequence basic organizational faults developed in it such an urgency and frenzy that both technical science and leadership were left behind.

b. The concept "improvisation" must be once more clarified. What distinguishes extemporaneous action from organizational planning is a matter of coherence and objective. The previously mentioned American College Dictionary differentiates between organization, compilation and improvisation. Organization is defined as: "act of organizing, to form as a whole, consisting of coordinated parts for harmonious action;" compilation as: "act of compiling, to make something of materials from various sources;" improvisation as: "act of improvising, to compose or execute anything extemporaneously." Finally, composition is defined as: "act of combining parts or elements to form a whole."

The work of the Army High Command, which consisted of watching over and promoting developments with the objective of strengthening defensive power, cannot, on the basis of these definitions, be termed an improvisation. Such a designation would not do justice to the efforts made and the moderate objectives chosen. Its work was only twisted and frustrated, subjected to the time pressure of excessive

haste; the composition did not mature but remained a compilation.

c. If time and space -- in this case the scene of a controlled rearmament industry poor in raw materials and lacking coordinated direction -- were inimical to the motorization of the Wehrmacht, there remained another way open for the new establishment, which applies also to the Luftwaffe.

TIME, MATERIAL and SIMPLICITY are the elements of 'composition'. Simplicity does not mean equalization, normalization, the elimination of differences inherent in the nature of things, but a limitation in the choice of means. The more diversified the organization becomes, the greater the measure of misunderstanding it will meet,,the more expensive will be its maintenance, the more "rough spots" it will have which threaten its existence, and the more time will be required for its organization, management, and incorporation into the whole. Time requirements and simplicity affect every sphere of activity, including training, education, and the setting of strategic and operational goals.

With this as a hypothesis, and measured by the final result, one would have to consider

(1) whether motorization, if its urgency was inescapable, could not have been simplified,

(2) whether a useable and recognizable strategic objective determined the course of motorization,

(3) how far the military top-level organization of the Army High Command corresponded to organizational prerequisites,

(4) in what manner and with what sort of a top-level organization the decisive element "time" could have come into its own.

The pressure of time and the lack of continuity were symptomatic not only of the rearmament program but of the entire course of events in those times. Under this pressure of time the positive zeal in the Army High Command and in the officers' corps had imperceptibly pushed into the background the essential virtue of the Wehrmacht, its educational and stabilizing role. The Army High Command and the officers' corps, in other words, the military leaders and their assistants, cannot be separated from one another. They are interdependent, for the military leaders give the officers' corps its character and the officers' corps in turn gives the military leaders their strength. There are no gaps to investigate here. But the over-hasty rearmament program enlarged and vulgarized that fine instrument of a restricted officers' corps by inflation of its ranks. Old officers with commercial interests, or who had stayed away from military developments, or had drifted into political party organizations, filled the ranks. A constant coming and going, reassigning, and reorganizing prevented the training processes, which require time since their development is slow. The pressure of time also prevented the reorganization at top-level, which was then needed, just as much as did the political incontinence of the time. Motorization and rearmament stood under an evil star; the only possible remedy would have been to have taken more time.

It follows from the above that a critical study of military developments in Germany since 1919 offers three fields of investigation:

(1) The chronicle of military events.

(2) A graphic presentation of the chains of command, and of the top-level command organization.

(3) The composition, the modus vivendi, and the views of the officers' corps as well as the training programs of its academic institutions.

Conclusions:

Lack of time led to an over-hasty development, and the pressure of time to partial solutions, in the defense program. From the point of view of operations, ideas were almost running ahead of time and its means; in strategy, thought remained bogged down in the out-dated phenomena of World War I. Military leadership was suffering from internal conflict. On the strategic side, basic concepts became lifeless patterns. All too often too much attention remained focused on the conditions of World War I, on its rivalries and technical bottlenecks, and on its moral weaknesses. Liberating actions such as the creation of a school of strategy, an allocation of responsibilities, uniform chains of command in all arms and services, and so forth, were either lacking altogether or were reduced to catch-words or even lies. Replacement of the obligation to serve by the honor of serving remained in the end only on paper. The imponderables, even when these lay within the military sphere -- such as the press service, freedom of opinion,

and freedom of assembly -- instead of developing along generous lines were met with senile conservatism, and with an insufficiency born of fear. The inadequate contact with foreign countries did the rest, nor must we forget the war losses, which had swept away irreplaceable strength, and which were precisely what should have compelled a slowing down in the pace set. The writing of the war history, biased and written from the military point of view, completed the evil. Development was either consumed by internal strife or tended toward self-worship. It would have been less disastrous to mistake the trends of future wars than to leave such estimations to individual opinion. A wrong choice of means will not lead to a very good solution, but nevertheless to a solution that is better than letting things drift.

So far as operations were concerned, the course of development was rather the reverse of the above. Ideas on tank masses and on the opening of hostilities ran ahead of technical possibilities, or ignored existing limitations, even of an international kind. Training in operations must not be allowed to develop in a vacuum but must have strategic limitations not only for its points of departure but also for its solutions. This, of course, presupposes that the home organization maintains a clear separation of competencies and that every shifting of responsibility -- and consequent negation of responsibility in the result -- is condemned. This in turn depends on a top-level leadership which has been properly trained in strategy, international law, sociology, economics and organization. Being superficially or occasionally exposed to these subjects will not suffice.

A continuous development, not necessarily excluding great forward strides, is the ABC of mobilization.

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Edgar Roehricht
General der Infanterie

Heilbronn a.N., 5 Oct 1948

The Old Organization of the Army

High Command

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Appendix 4

A. The old Organization of the Army High Command

1. Basic Concepts.

Every responsible action is the result of reflection. While this applies to individuals, it is even more applicable to the leading personalities who occupy important government positions.

Whosoever is entrusted with the future and continued existence of his own people, in so far as they are subject to or at least under the influence of military measures, cannot allow his views to be dependent on the requirements of the day alone but must live in a world of ideas (as a part of a general conception of life, at least) in which every possible conclusion has been drawn in advance, and which provides him with a basis for, and legitimizes, his actions.

Thus, German military leadership, with its foundations in tradition, also had developed its own world of ideas as the sum of lessons learned from past successes and failures. At the same time — as in all other countries — the historical course of events, as well as the geographical and economic situation, the political constitution, and the national character, were not without their influence.

a. Clausewitz

The modern age begins with Napoleon I, and the ideology of German militarists of recent times — considered as a philosophy of life reduced to a system — begins with their contemporary, Clausewitz, a philosopher on the art of war.

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Appendix 4

It is not the object of this study to trace military ideas and their development from Clausewitz up to Hitler's wars. Only the essentials will be brought out here, and in so doing we will extract from the teachings and theories of "the great master" whatever remains living and effective.

Clausewitz has become a historic name and concept far beyond Germany's borders. This is particularly true of Japan, where his work, as stated by General Oshima, was considered a "book of knowledge." Nor should the influence of Clausewitz upon the thought processes of Russian military leaders be underestimated.

In Hitler's time Germans were fond of quoting Clausewitz; and his main literary work "On War" (Vom Kriege), was republished more than once.

Clausewitz -- it must be emphasized -- does not offer any recipes or advice. His object was to propound theories. At all times he strove toward a knowledge of the nature of things, not mere technique (that is to say, a doctrine which prescribes conduct).

His theories are not directives, but they interpret the truth so as to give the reader the basis for his own decisions. Their objective is to help one set up his own principles and rules. Not mere knowledge but the ability to perform should be the objective in the self-education of those who will be called upon to act. To this end theories are developed to render all possible assistance.

As soon as theory has provided him with these basic principles and taught him self-reliance, he is released to the higher sphere, the sphere of action. The final solution to every problem must in the last analysis

be found within oneself. To quote von Schaefer:

> "The eternal laws of Clausewitz' teachings remain even if the form of their application changes and every case which comes up in the course of war must be thought through according to its peculiarities. That the destruction of enemy forces is the supreme and therefore the first objective to be aimed at; that, in order to attain it, one should be as strong as possible, first, in general, and secondly, at the decisive point; and that an attack upon the enemy's main force, preferably against his flank or rear, is of greater effectiveness, when it succeeds, than a frontal victory; that it is important to exploit victory through pursuit until the vanquished submits to the will of the victor — these are truths which have always been and always will remain valid under all circumstances, but which no one before Clausewitz had expressed so logically or with such clarity."

The best known and generally misquoted statement of Clausewitz on the relation of politics to the conduct of war reads as follows: "So we see that war is not merely a political act but a real political instrument, an extension of political relations, and the implementation thereof by other means."

On this subject Seeckt makes the following comment:

> "The quotation is misunderstood when, used as a catchword, the true nature of war, so precisely formulated by Clausewitz, is allowed to obscure the objective of destroying the enemy. Correctly interpreted it means that war is not self-contained but merges into the organic life of peoples in accordance with laws of its own. Just as it is influenced by, it also influences, politics. With its conclusion the world does not return to the former state of things but is confronted by new problems."

It would be saying too much to maintain that the comprehensive structure of Clausewitz' philosophy, so imposing in its compactness, had exerted an important influence on the minds of the bulk of the German officers' corps. Furthermore, as we have already said,

Clausewitz was by no means the "teacher of war" he is generally considered to have been, but a scholar who developed a logical system of thought and whose work was hardly ever read in context and even less often understood. For the great majority in the officers' corps the importance of Clausewitz was reduced to a few quotations taken out of context and considered, but not accepted, as maxims.

But on the other hand it must not be overlooked that Moltke, Schlieffen, and Ludendorff developed their theories from Clausewitz' and that thus channeled through leading minds, his ideas became a pillar upon which subsequent leaders based their views.

b. Schlieffen

Among those who developed their theories out of Clausewitz, and who, with the force of intellect and the fervor peculiar to great thinkers, had thoroughly explored the problems of war, one of the most outstanding was Count Schlieffen, the tutor to that generation of General Staff members which determined Germany's strategic and operational thinking and fought the battles of World War I.

Just as Clausewitz was the comprehensive thinker and philosopher of war as a whole so Schlieffen, as a natural consequence of his position as Chief of the General Staff, became the teacher of practical application, cut to measure to meet the requirements of his time.

In the "War Lessons of Moltke" (Moltke'sche Kriegslehren - published by the General Staff in 1912) we find the following statement: "It must be admitted that the entire plan of operations" — the campaign

of 1870 is referred to - "could only be carried out with a decisive numerical superiority. ... Continuous success can in any case only be attained with superiority in numbers right from the beginning of the war."

In contrast to this happy situation, in which Moltke had found himself, Schlieffen was confronted with the task of drafting a plan for victory with numerical inferiority or, at best, equality, and for a war on two fronts at that. He was further influenced by the following realization on which he felt constrained to base his line of thought: "The cultural level of the peoples, and the expense of the immense resources needed for the maintenance of armies running into millions, call for a quick decision and an early end. Therefore the "war on two fronts" * cannot be fought by throwing back one or the other enemy but by achieving the most complete possible annihilation of first the one opponent and then of the other."

He bases his theory of "the battle of annihilation" upon a realization of the difficult geographical position of his country in the middle of Europe and on the certainty of Germany's military inferiority.

In order to be able to conduct war against the East and the West simultaneously, and to bring it to a successful conclusion, his strategy for the over-all conduct of the war was based on the advantage of the inner line. Specifically, his objective was to destroy the enemy in a decisive battle through envelopment, if possible a double envelopment.

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* In the German typed copy this reads "Krieg nach zwei Monaten" (War after two months), but this is obviously an error and should read "Krieg nach zwei Fronten." (Note by reviewer.)

For such an action Cannae was his model. In order to back his theory with experiences he sought examples in the war history of all times. He laid stress on showing how " ... eternal principles become effective in ever changing forms. He, too, offered no easily comprehensible truths but rather that clear urge to find the truth which is the fruit of intellectual research."

The only thing new was the problems connected with armies which had grown to gigantic proportions.

Schlieffen strove toward a multiplication of German strength through a rapid shifting of forces in order to destroy one enemy after the other. On the other hand he was aware that in the long run such a procedure would exhaust the strength of the troops involved. For this reason he believed that only a war of short duration offered any chance of success for Germany.

c. The Failure to Recognize the Significance of Total War.

A treatise by Count Schlieffen written in the last years of his life (1911) bears the title "Armies of Millions" (Millionenheere) and reveals how deeply he thought over the problem of the ever-growing mass armies. Not only had the population increased to gigantic proportions in a growing industrial era, trade and industry in general, and indeed the entire basis for the growth of the population, had developed in a measure hitherto inconceivable.

In a speech before the Reichstag in 1887 Bismarck had already pointed out: "The war of the future will be an economic war, the fight for existence on a national plane. May my successors ever bear

that in mind and see to it that when the struggle comes we will be prepared." But neither the Reich's political nor military leadership had really taken this point of view into account.

Looking back today it seems incredible that an outstanding man like Schlieffen, fully aware of the critical situation of his country, in spite of all his anxious searching for solutions to the two-front war problem, completely failed to appreciate what an important role the economic potential of the country as such and of the nation and the purposeful employment of that strength would play in forcing a decision. To all intents he remained confined within the traditional narrow bounds of purely military considerations. And what we have said here of Schlieffen applies to the entire leadership of that generation.

On the German side World War I was preceded by an increase in armed forces. The now famous General Staff memorandum of 1912, which initiated this increase and which provided the arguments for the parliamentary struggle for its acceptance, completely lacks mention of an economic exploitation of German resources for war, and this in spite of the fact that it was known it would be a fight for survival. Far less did the memorandum make any mention of a mobilization of industry or the employment of the entire national strength in the defense of the nation.

The "Reich Archive Study on the World War" (Reichsarchivwerk ueber den Weltkrieg) in Volume 9, Section V, gives the following explanation for the deficiencies of preparation:

> "Like every highly developed industrial country, the German national economy possessed reserves in raw materials and food supplies which, even after an interruption of imports, would guarantee continued work to industry and continued sustenance to the people for a considerable length of time. ... According to peacetime calculations, a war lasting about a year could be endured without appreciable hardship, while an interruption of foreign imports lasting even only two years would necessarily cause grave anxiety concerning the subsistence of the people and the equipping of the armies. These anxieties were allayed by the almost universal view that a modern war would be of short duration. This was also the real reason why no adequate security was provided before the war -- neither in the foreign policy nor in economic measures -- against the dangers of economic isolation.
>
> If after the outbreak of the war Germany was hesitant about taking measures which had been rendered absolutely necessary by the actual supply situation and the chance of losing the war through the blockade, it was due to various reasons. First of all, there was the failure to realize the full extent of the danger, and, in some respects, a too favorable estimate of the food supply situation; then there was a reluctance to interfere in normal economic procedures with measures of unforeseeable consequence; and finally again the view that the war would not last long, a view which seemed to be confirmed by the rapid and victorious advance of the German western army. Only in the control of raw materials that were vitally important to the war industries were severe measures taken by the Ministry of War, under the influence of Dr. Walter Rathenau, as early as August 1914 to economize and conserve supplies."

It is clear, then, that the immense importance of the economic aspects of war was not recognized before the war, indeed, that even during the war the systematic control of the war industry was organized methodically only under the impact of the increasing effects of the blockade as a necessity and under the stress of circumstances. The same situation existed, for Germany at least, in every other sphere which today is understood to fall under the heading of "total war".

It follows naturally from the above that the organizational development of the necessary control agencies was also lacking in the top-level authorities responsible for the conduct of the war. Some of these agencies only came into existence gradually, and in an inadequate form, as the need arose.

Thus, so far as psychological and ideological preparedness for modern war was concerned, the failure to think through each problem to its logical conclusion had a decisive effect on the outcome of the war.

In his book "The Other Side of the Hill" Liddell Hart, the English historian and writer on military subjects, sums up his opinion of the German generals of World War II by saying that they were the most perfect product of their profession — in every respect. He writes: "They could have been better if their outlook had been wider and their understanding deeper. But if they had become philosophers they would have ceased to be soldiers."

In the course of its history the German army has produced only one soldier who might have made the claim of qualifying as Liddell Hart's "philosopher", and that was Clausewitz. But Clausewitz only began to philosophize at the writing table, when no longer an actor on the scene, and in any case he had never himself held an important command.

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Appendix 4

2. The Technical Foundations of Development

I. Before Rearmament.

World War I had terminated with Germany's collapse, but without leaving the German soldier convinced that he was inferior in the true military sense. The decisive factors had been Germany's isolation from all sources of raw material and the effects of the starvation blockade; to this had been added the recognition of the opponent's constantly growing superiority in material. Naturally, this realization was not without effect upon the military thought of the first post-war period.

The Treaty of Versailles had made Germany, disarmed down to a small remnant, an island of military impotency in the midst of armed nations, with the result that its situation, in view of the predominant importance of material resources just referred to, appeared hopeless. Precisly for this reason there arose for politicians and military leaders the necessity of asking the question: What can be done in the future to fend off military threat? That such thoughts were not unnecessary had been proven by the Polish advance into Upper-Silesia subsequent to the conclusion of the Versailles Treaty, and by the French seizure of the Ruhr in 1923. It is not only the history of modern times which has shown that the greatest incentive for an attack is the defenselessness of one party.

Apart from other restrictive claims the dictated peace stipulated the strength, organization, and equipment of the German Reichswehr without

any time limitation. The promised disarmament in neighboring countries did not materialize.

Even allowing for the fact that political development was in a state of perpetual flux — in history there is no settled state of affairs but only stages of transition — this did not relieve the German leaders of the responsibility of concerning themselves with the problems of an effective military defense of the country on the basis of current conditions.

What was there to do?

First of all, the Reich had soberly and clearly to draw the logical political and strategic conclusions from the existing situation.

Groener, on assuming his position as Minister of Defense, reduced the problem to a simple formula: "For a Germany restricted to the defense of its territory and kept militarily weak, the conduct of even a purely defensive engagement in two directions (that is to say, a war on two fronts) and even for a short period is impossible.

"Thus, policies must always be such that no conflict with the West, the stronger of the two neighbors, can develop. All means must be employed for defense in the East."

In conformity with this view, the foreign policy of the Weimar period (from Stresemann to Bruening) again and again voluntarily accepted Germany's western frontier as final, while the same guarantees were refused in the East. With the renunciation of any claim to revision in the West it was intended to keep open the possibility of striving not

only toward a military defense in the East but also, if the political constellation changed, toward a reconsideration of Germany's national interests in that direction, interests which had been disregarded at Versailles.

For a small professional army denied modernization there is the danger that its range of view, as also that of its commanders, will shrink. In view of the unrestrained development taking place abroad, some countermeasure had to be taken -- unless an army as a useful instrument of national defense was to be renounced altogether.

Besides attending to its duties within the narrow framework of the little army, the officers' corps, therefore, continued to take a theoretical interest in the lessons to be drawn from the experiences of the world war and their effects upon a modern army. In the wake of this interest there gradually developed in the minds of men in high position -- indeed also, as might be expected in a country of military tradition which had just lost a great and highly consequential war, in the minds of specialists and other interested parties who might or might not have anything to say in the matter -- a set of ideas regarding the possibilities of a future war.

a. Influence of World War I

Apart from the development of air forces, which corresponded to the progress made in the field of aeronautics, the world war had introduced two new instruments of war, the tank and poison gas, both still in the experimental stage.

The theory of the inevitable brevity of a modern war had proven an error of far-reaching consequence. In addition to the forces in the field, the collective strength of nations in manpower, materials, and economy, had in ever increasing measure been thrown into the picture. Furthermore, the effect of propaganda on the morale and psychological resistance of both the military and civilian population had been brought into play.

From the point of view of the Germans, who, generally speaking, thought in terms of a continental rather than global war (particularly after Versailles), the experiences of the war, aside from the preponderant role played by materiel, were no incentive to break with the fundamental concepts of the past or, what amounted to the same thing, to throw overboard the ideological legacy of Clausewitz and Schlieffen. Even a modern war would continue to be subject to the "supreme law of decision by force of arms". Everything else would be but a means to that end.

The war had served the purpose of testing the basic principles of military leaders regarding tactics and operations. Some had become obsolete through recent developments, but for the most part they had proven their worth.

The characteristic feature of World War I, though already forecast in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, showed itself to be the freezing of all fronts into a battle of position after a short war of movement.

While in Moltke's time operations culminated in the struggles of battle, now, on the contrary, the problem was to win a decision by

bringing the frozen front back into movement with the aid of a battle. As Ludendorff put it before the western spring offensive of 1918, "tactics must be given precedence over strategy". The choice of breakthrough points now frequently depended on tactical rather than on operational considerations.

Schlieffen's aim was to win a decision through envelopment, now, the breakthrough was the problem. Out of the need of making this possible in the face of the defensive power of modern weapons, gas, or more precisely, chemical warfare, was resorted to as medium of attack, and the tank was created to break through fixed positions in advance of the infantry; that is to say, at the beginning their use was purely tactical. The airplane also remained for the time being chiefly in the direct service of an army fighting in and for positions.

While the combustion engine was already in increasing measure serving the needs of supply and sometimes also the transport of combat forces, its possibilities for tactical and operational purposes had by no means been recognized as yet, and the technical prerequisites had not yet been met in full measure. No doubt part of the trouble, in so far as the Central Powers are concerned, was of an economic nature.

During this phase, in which for the first time the experiences and the knowledge gained in the last war began to crystallize, we encounter a new type of person in the German officers' corps, the officer interested in technical matters, who is not strictly a specialist, but who

is interested in adding some technical knowledge to his general training. Good technicians had always been on hand, particularly in the technical arms, but wearing the blinders of one-sidedness common in such circles. On the other hand it cannot be denied that the men called to leadership generally thought in the past and were not trained in the new technical developments. It was not a matter of chance, for instance, that in 1914 the German Army High Command during the first decisive weeks of the war sat before primitive telephones without contact to its forces and thus practically neutralized, at a time when the Hughes teletype instrument, in existence for some years, kept the Austrian Army High Command in touch with the headquarters of its various armies.

As the result of the possibilities for technical development which the war had brought to light, an interest, and gradually also an understanding, for technical matters began to gain ground among the men in command positions. The first champions of new developments began to stir, though for the time being, and perforce, only on the theoretical plane.

b. Reichswehr Period

In the beginning, all deliberations relative to the country's defense were based on nothing more than the Reichswehr, a small outdated army, restricted to a primitive level. While imagination which could not be restricted could busy itself with all aspects of methods of warfare, planning for any eventuality which might actually

arise, necessarily had to be trimmed to the narrow limits of a disarmed Germany.

In an emergency, the fighting forces could have been tripled by drawing on the reserves of trained men and thus creating an army of twenty-one divisions. But modern weapons were lacking; also the necessary airforce. In case of war this deficiency could not even be made up through improvisation!

The political conditions in Europe during the twenties were such that Germany, even if involved in a war with one of its smaller neighbors, would have been in a position of military inferiority. Since this meant that the possibility of an offensive war with the object of forcing a decision had to be left out of consideration, the Reichswehr, in all its deliberations and measures, kept the idea of defensive warfare exclusively in the foreground.

It is self-evident that within the limits of these deliberations everything was considered that might be used to increase Germany's weak fighting power. For this reason, the idea of an elite army, that is to say, a peacetime force in which every officer and soldier would be so trained that he could assume the next grade higher than his peacetime position, played an important part in the training program.

All in all the period of the Reichswehr was, from a military point of view, a compulsory backward step into the primitive, and as such presented a special case and was ineffective in the development of the big problems of a future war.

Only one idea which at times played an important part in those

days probably gained an importance beyond its original motivation, namely, the idea of a regular and irregular peoples' war as a means of defense, the employment in combat of volunteer troops and sabotage units improvised as the occasion demanded in the rear of an enemy advancing into the interior of the country.

This idea, which for a while had its proponents particularly in eastern Germany, was soon dropped, being, as history proves, foreign to the German national character. Nevertheless, the idea may have gained a surprising measure of interest in the course of World War II, if we take into consideration the partisan movement in the vast expanses of the Russian battle areas, and the part played by underground movements, such as the Maquis and others, in various countries.

The basic problems of this type of warfare had been exhaustively studied by Clausewitz in Part VI of his book "On War". Modern technical means and the immense dimensions of a future war will no doubt represent a factor that must be taken into consideration. The present state of communication techniques permits a close control of such units to coordinate their action with main operations, while air transport makes it possible to deliver weapons, supplies, and reinforcements. It should also not be forgotten that in a future armed conflict, the ideological controversies, which will be intensified through propaganda, will lead inevitably to a show-down, and thus will not be without influence on the methods by which the war is conducted.

c. The Free Evolution of Ideas During the Reichswehr Period.

Besides being concerned with the immediate problems of the country's defense, discussions extended to the developments which went on unrestrained in other countries, a natural consequence of the necessity of knowing the methods and means of combat of future enemies, so as to organize the defense accordingly. This is why the service manuals of that time also dealt with weapons which the Reichswehr itself was not allowed to introduce.

Also account had to be taken of the probability that history would not stop with the Treaty of Versailles; a military vacuum in the midst of nations armed to the teeth has never been of long duration. Consequently it was necessary for men in key positions to keep abreast of the times if they did not want to fall hopelessly behind.

Von Seeckt, Creator of the Reichswehr. In a treatise on "Modern Armies" which appeared after his retirement in 1929, Seeckt gave the following ideas as his personal view on the course of development:

> "Within the concept 'war' lies the contest between man and material. Technical science works on both sides. Consequently it is quite wrong to speak of a victory of material over man. Material has won out over masses but not over man himself, and never will, since it comes to life only in the hands of men.
>
> The fault lies therein that an immovable and almost defenseless human mass was exposed to the brutal effect of material. The more we increase the fighting mass, the surer is the victory of material; so there remains only the struggle between man's mind and inanimate material."

Seeckt sees the solution "in the use of highly trained, mobile, and therefore small armies whose effectiveness will be greatly increased

through the airforce, along with the simultaneous preparation of the entire combat strength, either to support the attack or to sacrifice itself in the defense of the Fatherland."

Apart from the testimony of this leading soldier of the twenties we will cite a second one to show that the discussions relative to these questions were by no means limited to military circles. One of the most prominent thinkers of the first half of our century, the philosopher-historian Oswald Spengler in his main work "The Decline of the West", (Der Untergang des Abendlandes) a book published in 1922 which became known far beyond Germany's frontiers, makes the following statement (Vol. 2, Chap. "The State"):

> "Through the levies of these four years" - meaning World War I - "the principle of general conscription which originated during the French Revolution, and which was, indeed, thoroughly revolutionary in this form, had become obsolete, and along with it the tactical methods which had derived from it. (Footnote: It may still be kept as an inspiring idea.) In lieu of standing armies we shall from now on have the gradual introduction of professional armies consisting of enthusiastic volunteers, ready for war, and in lieu of the millions we shall again have the hundred thousands. ...
>
> In this war for the dominance of the whole world entire continents will be engaged; India, China, South Africa, Russia and Islam will be called to arms; new tactics and techniques will be brought into play against one another. The great world centers will dispose as they see fit of the smaller states, their territory, their economy, and their people; and all that will only be a province, an object, and a means to an end, their fate without significance in the big operation."

Considerations such as those on which Seeckt and Spengler based their ideas ran ahead of their times. They were glimpses into the distant future; a soldier rooted in the actualities of his time must

fit his thinking to that which lies for him within the realm of possibility. Furthermore, the minds of Germany's ruling class were not so much interested in developments concerned with a war of continents, from which Germany would be excluded. They were more concerned with the war possibilities inside Europe. Germany admittedly had a highly developed industry, but that industry was dependent on the importation of raw materials. The same applied to food supplies. Its strongest factor in a future war within central Europe was its numerically strong manpower potential, the same that had just proved its fighting qualities on western and eastern battlefields. Consequently, the German line of thinking still favored mass armies, in spite of all theoretical knowledge to the contrary. However, it should be pointed out that neighboring countries also held to the same tendency and that no basically modern trends could be noted there either.

For the rest it may be said that Germany possessed in its Reichswehr a little army which stood high in all human qualities but was lacking everything else. Seeckt's concept of a strategic army called simultaneously for a nation in arms, a fact which should not be overlooked. The Reichswehr was too weak a foundation from which to develop both. To do so would have required much time.

Nor should it be forgotten that as long as the chains of Versailles remained, all work done beyond their limitations was done only in theory, without the possibility of putting such theories to a practical test. When the pursuit of an idea carries people too far from basic realities

they gradually find themselves building a Utopia in an empty space. Generally speaking, German officers were not greatly inclined toward one-sided theorizing and, furthermore, their leading personalities, all came out of the old army and had just experienced that army's worth on the battlefields of the world war. This, then, was the sphere within which they felt at home so that they were reluctant to part even in thought from the fundamental principle that a strong army rested on universal service.

d. Motorization

Meanwhile, throughout the world, for business and for pleasure, the internal combustion engine had made its triumphal entry. It had by now attained a high degree of technical perfection and utility, and industry, the highway system, as well as the technical thinking and skill of the people, had in large measure become adapted to the demands of motorization.

During World War I, practically all armies had relied chiefly on the traditional means of transportation, moving at the speed of the foot-marching columns, or the speed of the horse, as in the days of Caesar or Wallenstein. * The railway was the only new means for long-distance transportation. It had been used for the first time for the movement of large masses of troops during the American Civil War, and on the German side it had been used during World War I to exploit the

* Albrecht von Wallenstein, Duke of Friedland, Commander in Chief of the Austrian Forces in the Thirty Years War, 1618-48.

advantages of the inner line in the conduct of a two-front war. Otherwise it was used mostly for the movement of replacements and supplies.

During World War I the combustion engine played only an auxiliary role, generally limited to a small area. Now arose the problem of using this new motive power, protected by armor plating, as an instrument of war on the battlefield itself, as well as for the purpose of rendering large units mobile for combat purposes. The decisive medium had thereby been found to change the aspect of warfare, which had begged down in positional warfare. Operation means movement. A new era had dawned for the soldier.

The German armed forces under the Versailles Treaty could only take a theoretical part in these developments, but it had to take account of them, since in future it would in increasing measure have to deal with motorized enemies. Furthermore, it could be hoped that the problems of motorization would some day also have practical meaning for Germany.

Every new, revolutionary idea, whose practical application is still in the initial stage and whose effects cannot yet be foreseen, will find champions who will miss the mark because they can see no further than this new idea of theirs. (Specialists are always narrow-minded to a certain extent.) At the same time the new idea also finds opponents who have the natural tendency of clinging to the traditional and proven methods and who are unable and disinclined to change their way of thinking. The more "tradition" an army has the more conservative will be its thinking.

The prominent tank champion in the Reichswehr was Guderian. He had early recognized that the tank was more than an auxiliary weapon in the service of bogged-down infantry and had consequently demanded the creation of independent tank units capable of independent action. In this way he wished to make available to the command a weapon for large-scale operations.

By and large, German ideas on the subject were the same as those of other European countries, those of de Gaulle in France, and those of Fuller and Liddell Hart in England. The latter, already in the middle twenties, in his book "The Great Captains Unveiled" had referred to the wide range of operation and the extreme mobility of the armies of Ghengis-Khan to show how tank armies could be used in the future. But while Liddell Hart, though not an active soldier, exerted an influence on the first directives and developments for the first English tank units, in Germany the development remained in the theoretical stage. The few tanks which Germany could afford to operate on Soviet-Russian training fields only served for the testing of technical problems.

II. Rearmament

This was the state of affairs when the political course of events in 1934 cleared the way for the transition from theory to practice.

First of all it should be mentioned that with the appearance of the serious possibility of rearmament the treatment of these problems

in literature inevitably assumed new aspects. If previously no limitations were imposed on the free play of mind and phantasy, with everyone taking a part in the discussions and airing his own private opinion, the need now arose of taking security requirements into consideration. From that time on, consequently, the treatment of the subject became more general and less concrete; propaganda tendencies moved into the foreground. (To a certain extent propaganda is never objective.)

An army which has been kept at a low level of armament and technical equipment and which has no large reserves of weapons, materiel, and ammunition has, in case of rearmament, a decisive advantage. It can start at the beginning. It is free of the ballast of existing types and calibers, stored in huge quantities, that weigh down the start of a new development. On the other hand there is a natural lack of practical and organizational experience upon which such an army might build. It becomes necessary to skip entire stages of normal development.

This was the state of affairs when Germany set about taking her place in the ranks of the great powers.

So far as old type units, the infantry divisions, are concerned, little need be said concerning the development of the new army. Their expansion followed the lines of established views and experience, naturally adapted to new conditions. Thus, these units were largely equipped with their own anti-tank weapons, a new development. The internal combustion engine was also introduced but without changing the established transportation set-up.

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Appendix 4

Of decisive importance in the build-up of the German army were the conclusions drawn from formerly theoretical considerations in the creation of the armored command. It was important that from the beginning the decision was in favor of an independent command capable of being used in operations.

The new armored command had two predecessors. The first was the motortransport units which had existed in the Reichswehr within the limitations of the Treaty of Versailles as pure transport units without any real combat duties and in which specifically technical personnel predominated. The other was the cavalry, a combat force trained for movement and with an excellent fighting tradition, which had in the meantime become antiquated and uneconomical in so far as its use as an independent fighting force was concerned since the effective fighting force which it could bring to bear on the battlefield was entirely disproportionate to the expenditure in personnel, baggage-trains, supply service, and the transportation media involved.

The new Armored Command was created out of a combination of these two, while a considerable percentage of the leading men also came from the infantry. With the exception of a few remnants, the cavalry disappeared, but it brought its spirit and energy into the new arm. There can be no doubt that the armored force owed much to the cavalry, particularly so in regard to leadership and operational performance.

From planning to practical execution the way is always further and more difficult than previously anticipated.

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Appendix 4

In a country with a longstanding infantry tradition, infantry units are more easily created than a completely new arm making exacting technical demands and without established or tested bases from which to start. Thus, the first objective necessarily was to create a few experimental units before attempting to proceed with the full program.

The effective rang and the employment possibilities of any branch of the service grow with its strength. This applies also to armor, the operational employment of which is contingent upon an adequate number of units being available. Thus, the new arm only gradually grew into the role originally intended for it. Beside the technical development there was the difficulty of making available the required trained personnel.

For some time the idea was entertained of employing tanks -- apart from the independent operational employment of the armored command -- in combination with infantry divisions and of creating special units, armored brigades, for this purpose, but developments soon superceded this plan.

At an early stage the need of independent motorized units was recognised, specific units with their own organic motorized vehicles and equipped with the appropriate means of combat, in other words, motorized infantry divisions available for joint operational employment with armored units. Such divisions could also be assigned to normal armies as combat units that could be moved rapidly from one place to another.

Thus beside the enlarged and modernized old-style army, numerically still by far the largest group, the new armored branch gradually developed, which for the time being was still too small to be a decisive factor.

A new arm of a special and unconventional type calls also for a new type of command staff, since commanders and the General Staff Corps officers assisting them who had not received the appropriate training could not be expected to have a mastery of the principles of operations, which principles were still in a state of flux and development. Out of this need special motorized corps headquarters first came into existence, which were later redesignated armored corps, followed later by a separate army group headquarters, which initially was concerned only with training.

It was during the war, in 1940, that an independent army consisting of armored and motorized divisions, the Gruppe Kleist, for the first time commenced operating on its own, an operation which resulted in the breakthrough on the Ardennes front and the advance to the coast and thereby gave historical evidence of the operational effectiveness of this new arm.

An army based on old tradition is in its normal course of development inclined to solid and thorough work and wary of improvisations. To this fact must be added, in the case of the German army, just emerged from the period of restraint imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, a period of twelve years during which it had stagnated.

Even intellectually alert officers in all their plans and considerations had never thought of any other course than that of a gradual rearmament until Germany had reached parity with its neighbors, thereby

removing the "vacuum" which their country represented.

The impetus for the rearmament which began at this time came from political leaders and not from the army. Politics set the objectives and dictated the tempo. Solid, well-grounded work with long-range objectives, now was displaced suddenly by a rearmament program operating under the pressure of time and short-range objectives.

Every unit needs time in which to consolidate, and in like manner an officers' corps needs time to develop its skill up to the necessary standard and for thorough integration. This time was suddenly no longer available. Solid ground work was now generally replaced by improvisation, with an increasing dilution of the basic principles.

The consequence was particularly serious in the case of the officers' corps. The available personnel, already heavily drawn upon for the build-up of the Luftwaffe, offered a rather small base for the erection of the large organization contemplated. The problems could not be solved through promotions alone. It was necessary to reach back into older, de-activated reserves, who, skipping the intermediate stages were appointed to posts commensurate with their age. This procedure not only lowered the level of ability among appointees but also adversely affected training within the army, and each year brought new expansions to further tear apart the officers' corps before ever it had had time for proper integration.

The same effects of time pressure were evident all around. Thus, for instance, new types of weapons were put into mass production before

they had been thoroughly tested. It is no wonder that the entire structure of the army, built up with excessive haste, showed all the defects of improvisations introduced under the pressure of time.

We may also touch briefly on the effects upon the command structure. The top-level itself remained unaffected, since such a centralized office functions separately from the size of the organization it controls. The General Staff, that is to say the corps of commanders' assistants, naturally had to lower its selective standards in order to provide the staff personnel required for the increasing number of units.

The new problems of command which arose with the creation of armored units had been the subject of theoretical consideration by the central office for some years, and it was here that the fundamental principles had been developed. The number of officers with practical experience in the new force gradually grew. It had been customary to require of the commanding general of a corps and of the commander in chief of an army the ability to control all the arms and services normally within his force and employ them appropriately. But with the armored forces a decisive new arm had come into existence very rapidly, which required of those in command a particularly high degree of flexibility and responsibility.

It was not possible in the last war to maintain the all-round type of army general, a problem which, even in the future, will only be solved when the armored command assumes a dominant role and the majority of the top ranking officers will have received training in it.

In the General Staff — at least at corps and army level — there were also during the war two types of general staff officers: those who could handle armored units and those who did not have this specialized knowledge, a fact which was a considerable source of command difficulty. But this was only a transitory state of affairs which had been imposed by the tempo of the war. No modern army will be able to refrain from developing in the General Staff officer a commander's assistant with all-round qualifications as a specific type.

signed: Edgar Roehricht

A. von Schell
Generalmajor

Gehrden ueber Hannover
October 1948

Influence of Early Motorization Experiments on Military Doctrine

Influence of Early Motorization Experiments on Military Doctrine

1. Naturally certain problems of motorization arose for the first time only during the course of World War I, and more particularly, in view of our own weakness in this sphere, on the side of the allied forces. (Germany, at the beginning of World War I, had only 4,000 motor driven vehicles in its entire army, and by the end of the war 40,000, a figure which the Americans alone surpassed as they appeared upon the scene with their few divisions in 1917. In contrast, the German Wehrmacht in 1941 had by the beginning of the Russian Campaign 2,000,000 motor driven vehicles of every kind for the East army alone.

But motorization during World War I had only a very limited effect. Apart from its use for hauling and for passenger transport, motor vehicles served for the most part for the transportation of materiel, and now and then also for the purpose of quickly bringing troops into battle, as the French did in the Battle of Verdun. (The French Mancuri Army's fabulous taxi columns for the Battle of the Curcq in September 1914 have been greatly exaggerated for propaganda purposes.)

From the autumn of 1917 onward tanks were added to the above and were of decisive importance during the last year of the war. But they were built and used for the purpose of permitting infantry to traverse territory swept by machine-guns, and were consequently a purely tactical

weapon. No one at that time thought of using tanks operationally. It had never been done before and also it was impossible on the basis of technical capacity.

Building upon these experiences the French and English after the war did organize the first mobile units in which, either in whole or in part, motorized or mechanized troops were organizationally brought together, but the tests and maneuvers with these units were kept within the pure, and at that very narrow, framework of tactical operations. (This is illustrated by the French maneuvers in the Eifel region and by the English training exercises around Aldershot.) Nothing more could be expected, for tanks on their own power, on roadways at that, moved at no more than from two to ten kilometers per hour, and motor transportation had not developed to the point of overcoming terrain difficulties.

It was the Englishman Fuller who for the first time demanded greater mobility and range for such units. This trend was emphasized more in England than in France. This may in part be due to the fact that in England tanks and motorized weapons developed out of the cavalry while in France they developed out of the infantry. Consequently in England the technical trend of development favored speed while in France the emphasis was on thicker armor-plating. But in their views and developments both armies right up to the war did not develop very much.

Naturally, we in Germany also concerned ourselves with these problems, but within the impossible organizational limits of our 100,000-man army we could do so only in theory. Practice could not help us along.

The only sphere in which practical tests remained possible was that of motorized troop transportation. Around the middle twenties the first great tests were undertaken with the moving of an infantry regiment, and from time to time these were repeated with variations and the continued technical improvement in the movement of troops. Within such units the solution to minor tactical problems was sought.

Also in theoretical maneuvers such units, up to the strength of a motorized division, came into consideration, but always considered as a problem in transportation, so that the Army High Command would leave the details to the railway section within the operational division. Consequently all these plans and tests were of no operational effect on the thinking of military leadership. Even the tactical effects were questioned by a considerable portion of the higher officers. That was the state of affairs around 1930.

At that time American opinion moved along the same lines. At Fort Benning tanks were used for infantry battles in small units, in companies and platoons, and even at the armored school at Fort Meade only technical problems, often of very minor nature, were taken up.

In winter 1929-30 the Army High Command decided, in theory at least, to replace the horse-drawn supply trains of all infantry divisions with truck convoys. There was no doubt that this move would greatly liberate the fighting forces from dependence on nearby sources of supply or railheads. The resulting increase in the entire army's mobility was also recognized.

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In the meantime research work aiming at the construction of a practical tank continued. What was desired and asked for was a fast, well armed and well armored tank, capable of moving over rough terrain across country. Around the middle of the thirties, chiefly because of General Guderian, the first tank divisions were organized. They were of course inadequate in equipment but the basic organization remained the same right up through World War II. This proves that the organization was right, and points to great foresight on the part of the responsible officers in the Army High Command, for with the choice of this type of organization the armored divisions were set up so that they could fight and operate independently, a fact which was stressed from the beginning in the provisional instructions regarding their employment in battle. But neither in the course of practical exercises nor in theoretical discussions or war games was there any recognition of the fact that an agency had come into existence which was destined to overthrow the entire established order of operational thinking.

Occasionally, though, war games were held in which up to four armored divisions were employed on each side. Even though these were operational games, we need not examine, for the fact was certainly not recognized, whether these games introduced any fundamental changes in operational thinking. It is obvious that these games moved within the framework of the former sphere of larger cavalry units.

On the other hand, even in high military circles, the question of motorization remained a subject of much contention; it was rejected by many, or at least was considered only with great suspicion. These

officers regarded tanks as infantry aids operating closely together and fighting in step with foot soldiers. Also there was the feeling that the massing of motor vehicles would cause very serious traffic congestion which would lead to a paralysis of operational mobility rather than to an expediting of the same.

As late as May 1938 it had been thought necessary to carry out training ground exercises with tank supported infantry to find out once more whether it might not be better to set up the tank company, in the words used on that occasion by an extremist of the infantry school, as the "15th company of infantry regiments".* It was at about this same time that, under instruction of the Chief of General Staff, the corps and division commanders of the Army High Command received several days' instruction which acquainted them with the Army High Command's views relative to the possible employment of armored units. It was not until 1938 that an armored division was employed in larger maneuvers, but even then in a purely tactical capacity.

In the light of these facts it is not surprising that their organizational effect in the Army High Command and in the army was small. The first sign was probably the organizing of an armored corps staff around 1935. This staff, however, was chiefly, perhaps even exclusively, set up for the purpose of administration and training. Around 1937 special army group headquarters for armored troops was set up. No doubt also this organization was to concern itself exclusively with

* In the German army the Heavy Weapons Company and the Antitank Company were always designated as the 13th and 14th companies.

the coordination of training in all the armored divisions of the army. Also the creation in the autumn of 1938 of a "plenipotentiary for motor transport", and the unifying of this position with that of the "inspectorate for armored troops and motorization" and its subordinate inspectorates for cavalry and supply units, served primarily for the purpose of bringing together all matters affecting motorization.

II. Thus the state of affairs at the outbreak of the war was as follows: General motorization in the army had been greatly advanced; there were armored divisions and motorized rifle divisions and also motorized GHQ troops. Furthermore, the supply system of all other troops was motorized. There was a training school for armored troops in which problems of motorization in general were taken up; there was a motorized army group headquarters, and the staff of an armored corps. The important members of the Army High Command were fully aware of the advantages of motorization and of armored divisions, but more in the sense that the army thereby acquired considerably greater striking power, with reference to armored divisions, and much higher operational mobility, with reference to general mobilization and, particularly, supply. It is doubtful, however, that it was realized to what extent motorization would introduce a totally new line of thought in regard to operations. Outside of the Army High Command, moreover, there were still many high ranking officers who denied the value of motorization and of armored divisions. The Army High Command nevertheless held on to their view.

In line with this distrust the opponents of motorization had grave doubt relative to the use of armored divisions in the Poland Campaign in the autumn of 1939. The terrain conditions were a source of anxiety, All armies, indeed, were inclined to use armored divisions for the build-up of tactical strong points, but not for the preparation of operational strong points, designed to give the war a new aspect. The actual performance of the troops and their leaders, who without concern for their flanks stormed forward without hesitation routing the enemy far to the rear, showed that motorization of every sort was capable of giving war a new operational aspect. Now with one stroke all who were still in doubt were convinced.

It remains to the credit of army leadership that they had clearly recognized this basic change in operational thinking and had drawn their conclusions therefrom. One armored division alone was too weak to obtain operational success. Stronger forces were required, capable of fighting more independently than the rest of the troops. It had been proven that armored divisions were equal to every type of fighting and that they did not need the close support of other troops. On the strength of this experience, armored groups (more exactly armored corps) were brought into operation at the operation strong points for the battle of France in 1940. These also succeeded in what had hitherto been inconceivable short time, in winning a decision in France.

With this collapse of the western opponents the world suddenly realized that tanks and motorization had overthrown all earlier

operational concepts and possibilities and had given war a new aspect. It was shown that an opponent, once his line has been broken through, was not able to stem the tide over a depth of hundreds of kilometers. This he could only do if he himself had armored divisions ready to strike in force within his rear areas. (During the entire war no such defense was brought into operation. It was scarcely possible since the one who is being attacked will strive to prevent a threatened breakthrough by bringing up all available reserves. If the breakthrough then still takes place there are not likely to be available armored divisions in the rear.)

The use of tanks during the 1940 battle of France nevertheless revealed some weaknesses. The armored corps had been subordinated to the armies, and these were tied down by their much slower moving and unwieldy infantry corps of normal type. For this reason the danger lay therein that the armies would hold the armored corps with too tight a rein and that their operational striking power and reach would not be exploited.

In logical consequence armored armies were organized for the Russian Campaign of 1941 which, detached from the other armies, could carry out their operational tasks ahead of these. The successes of that year proved these measures correct. Thus the full range of possibilities which had been given to operational thinking by tanks and motorization had been recognized and exploited. (This possibility of setting in motion marching armies behind motorized armies had occasionally been considered already before the war in the Army High Command,

but the thought had not matured to a clear recognition, nor awakened the awareness that the entire war could thereby acquire a new operational aspect.)

What happened after 1941 was a permanent backsliding, in this sphere of operations; not because of a lack of knowledge, but because the means were lacking and because of meddling on the part of those who had wrongly interpreted the experiences.

III. Summing up it may then be concluded that up till the beginning of the war in 1939, leading army men had recognized the fact that motorization and tanks would have far-reaching tactical and operational consequences. What had not been clearly recognized, however, was that the war would follow a new operational course. This was then accomplished in the course of two short campaigns. The third campaign showed the full effects of the application of this experience.

signed: A. von Schell

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Siegfried Westphal
General der Kavallerie

Appendix 6

10 October 1948

The Old Organization of the Army High Command;

Bases for Ideological and Technical Developments

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Appendix 6

The Old Organization of the Army High Command; Bases for Ideological and Technical Developments.

I. The Army's Top-Level Organization Between 1814 and 1945.

The organization of the German Army High Command as created in 1935 rested upon foundations laid at the time of Prussia's liberation from the rule of Napoleon I. The Army High Command had its origin in the Prussian Ministry of War. After Scharnhorst, chairman of the Reorganization Commission set up in 1809 and pioneer of the new Prussian army, General von Boyen, who became Minister of War in 1814, was particularly outstanding. Almost half a century later, this office was held for fifteen years by the strongest personality among all Prussian Ministers of War, Count von Roon, later a field marshal. Under him the army which had for a long time been stagnating was molded into the machine which Moltke led to victory in two wars.

The organization of the military top-level in the Prussian army did not undergo any fundamental change between 1814 and 1918. In the Prussian monarchy the king, as commander in chief, was at the head of the Army. * Under him were the Minister of War, the Chief of the Military Cabinet, and the Army General Staff, which had been detached from the Ministry of War in 1821 and was later given equal status with the Ministry.

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* This study will not deal with the armies of Bavaria, Saxony and Wuerttemberg, their ministries of war and general staffs and the role they played, or with Imperial Navy.

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The establishment of the Republic and the Treaty of Versailles resulted in important changes at military top-level. In accordance with article 47 of the German constitution, the President replaced the king as Commander in Chief of the entire armed forces, consisting of the army and navy. The former armies of Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Wuerttemberg, their ministries of war and their general staffs, as also the Prussian military cabinet, were dissolved. They were assimilated by the newly constituted Reichsheer * of 1920 and by the Reichswehr Ministry established in 1919. At the head of this Ministry was placed a parliamentary Reichswehr Minister who was no longer a soldier but a civilian.

The functions of the former Minister of War were henceforth to be divided between the Reichswehr Minister and the Chief of the Army Command, who was responsible to him and whose authority was restricted to purely military duties. The Army General Staff had to be dissolved in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Its essential duties were assumed by the Troops Office (Truppenamt), one of the four offices of and thus a part of the Army Command. In contrast to the former Army General Staff, the Troops Office was no longer independent.

The organization of 1935 introduced no basic changes in the high-level command of the army. The Chief of the Army Command became the Commander in Chief of the Army, the Troops Office became the Army General Staff. This General Staff remained in its subordinate position

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* Army of the German Reich

and was nothing more than a military command instrument serving the Commander in Chief of the Army. The new Army High Command combined in its five offices* all those functions of the former war ministries, of the Prussian Military Cabinet, and of the Army General Staff which had not been transferred in 1919 to the Reichswehr Minister and now to his successor, the Reich Minister of War and Commander in Chief of the Wehrmacht. All matters pertaining to defense, war economy, supply, military budget and internal politics (in so far as the Wehrmacht was affected) were handled centrally for the army, the navy, and the air-force under the Reich Minister of War (after 4 February 1938 under the Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command.)

Only two men ever held the office of Commander in Chief of the Army. They were General Freiherr von Fritsch, who was dismissed on 4 February 1938 on the basis of false and unproven accusations, and his successor, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch, who after grave differences of opinion regarding the conduct of the war in the East was removed by Hitler on 19 December 1941. From then on Hitler himself assumed command of the Army and was simultaneously Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces (Wehrmacht) and Commander-in-Chief of the Army. The Army from then on had no unified leadership and no representation. Hitler himself assumed responsibility for the conduct of operations and, in addition, secured a considerable influence on personal policies through the appointment of his own Chief Adjutant as head of

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* Army Personnel Office, Army General Staff, General Army Office, Army Administration Office, Army Ordnance Office.

the Army Personnel Office. The Chief of the Wehrmacht High Command, Field Marshal Keitel, took over from the Commander-in-Chief of the Army those duties which were not connected with the conduct of operations or with questions of officer personnel, while the Commander of the Replacement Training Army was now also responsible to him. The Army Ordnance Office was within certain limits placed under the Reich Minister for Armament and War Production. The original closed organization of the Army High Command was destroyed on 19 December 1941. After 20 July 1944 Himmler took command of the Replacement Training Army, and the Army Administration Office was likewise headed by a high ranking SS officer.

This much for the organizational foundations and their development.

II. Ideological Influences Upon the Army Resulting From:

a. Gneisenau

As is the case throughout history the ideological foundations of the German Army rested upon a few personalities. The influence which some of the most important of these exercised upon the Prussian-German army during the last 130 years will now be briefly dealt with.

Chronologically the first to deserve mention is August Graf Neidhard von Gneisenau, who has also been called "the intellectual conqueror of Napoleon I". He represents the ideal type of Chief of General Staff to a higher level commander, the type we have come to know and aim at. He imbued the old idea of a general staff officer with a new spirit. This new spirit was initiative and independence of thought and action, free of hierarchic bureaucracy and adulation. But more enduring was his objective of "destroying the forces of the enemy", as he expressed himself. At a time when maneuvering and diversionary moves still dominated the thinking of Prussian and allied commanders, he always strove for restless pursuit, for the most destructive course of battle through simultaneous attack against the front and the flanks of the enemy. He was the first since Frederic the Great to bring a high measure of mobility and offensive action into the Prussian army.

b. Clausewitz

Carl von Clausewitz, the favorite pupil of Scharnhorst, was ordained by fate to give permanent form to the sum of knowledge on the conduct of war in his day. With his rejection of methodology he placed himself in sharp contrast to the dogmatic rigidity which dominated the general line of thought among the general staffs of his time. It was only later generations that discovered that in his book "On War" he had bequeathed them an inexhaustible source of knowledge on the art of war.

Clausewitz insists that war be lifted out of its former position of isolation and incorporated in politics as one of the instruments of policy. "War is not merely a political act, but a true political element, an extension of political transaction, a carrying out of the latter with other means. What then remains as a feature peculiar to war concerns only the specific character of its means. For the political intention is the objective, war is the means, and never can the means be considered without its objective." In clear recognition of the decisive influence of the national and social forces in modern war he sponsored the introduction of national armies in place of professional armies. Above all, he formulated the subsequently famous principle of the strategy of annihilation, the thrust at the vital spot of a nation, meaning, according to circumstances, that nation's army, its capital, its dependence on allies, and even its "public opinion".

Clausewitz' wish "to write a book which will not be forgotten in two or three years" and would "cause a revolution in the theory of war", was fully realized. His writings laid the foundation for a complete transformation of the theories and principles governing the conduct of war. His doctrines are like a red line running through the ideological progress of the Prussian-German army. Only very gradually did these doctrines become known and were assimilated by the officers' corps, though it may well be that in some cases the doctrine was accepted without knowledge of the source. So far as the German General Staff, and thereby the potential commanders of the army were concerned, these doctrines became part of their very being. In their fundamental concepts and not infrequently in their various forms, they retain their validity to this day, even though the media of application have changed completely.

c. Moltke

Helmuth von Moltke's strategy rested in large measure upon the theories of Clausewitz, which he was able to translate into action. For him the conduct of war was not a science to be mastered but an art, "the art of clearly recognizing the ever changing and never predictable situation, of evaluating it deliberately, and then acting with decision." Not one method, not one instrument, not one improvisation, but many of these must be applied. At all times his main objective remained the winning of a quick and decisive victory over the enemy's main strength. He was the first one to succeed in bringing all his

fighting forces together on the field of battle.

Moltke had to put up many a fight to overcome the obstinate formalism with which his subordinates obstructed his ideas. But he also won this fight and became not only commander in the field but likewise the intellectual leader of the army. He liberated it from the hitherto conventional schematism, from the reluctance to give subordinates any freedom of action whatsoever. He created that independence among subordinate leaders which distinguished the German army until Hitler killed all independent authority. He sharply emphasized the difference between directive and order. His "instructions for higher troop commanders" of 24 June 1867 retain their basic validity down to this day. Moltke was the first to explore, with unsurpassed skill, the possibilities for bringing up and shifting troops by rail, not forgetting all relevant new conditions of space and time.

d. Schlieffen

Alfred Count von Schlieffen was next in the direct line of great military instructors. He based his work on teachings of Clausewitz and the campaigns of Moltke and developed the strategic idea of annihilation to the highest pitch of perfection. He never tired of teaching envelopment, and, as the strongest of all operational forms, the double envelopment. His studies on the Battle of Cannae and the Battle of Leuthen are classic. He eradicated the last remnants of dogmatic thought, saying: "only two things can be considered certain and established, one's own intention and the

unchangeable given conditions created by terrain, weather, and so forth." Schlieffen was the teacher of the men who led the German army of 1914/18. He shaped and trained the General Staff to the highest attainable technical perfection to provide active and thinking assistants to commanders in the field. The course which Germany's international relations were taking meant that in any future war Germany would have to defend herself against collectively superior enemies. For the German army, therefore, fighting "on the inner line" became the basic strategic law. In all planning and in the training of the General Staff Schlieffen spoke and acted accordingly.

e. Seeckt

Even the small German professional army after World War I enjoyed the leadership of a great soldier, Hans von Seeckt. He created this army and commanded it during the six and a half decisive years of its development. He considered it his special duty to preserve the intellectual legacy for a future in which he hoped to see Germany regain equality in military affairs. In this connection Generaloberst von Seeckt was not concerned with the outward form but with the preservation of the inner core. He wanted to keep alive within the army the often misunderstood "Prussian spirit", which had long since become the German spirit, the spirit of obedience, the fulfillment of one's duty faithfully, complete devotion to the Fatherland. It is not his fault or that of his great predecessors that precisely this spirit was so misused during the last decade.

f. Hindenburg

Even a short account of the personalities who influenced the leadership of the German army through their person and performance would be incomplete without mention of two men who in their nature and character were basically different.

The first of these two was Feldmarschall Paul von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg, Chief of the Army General Staff and virtually in command of the field army from 1916 to 1919. In 1925, as Reich President, he once again became the highest military authority. Not only for the army, but also for the entire people in a troubled time he was the symbol of devotion to duty, to the Fatherland, and to the State. As Seeckt expressed it, "he became in his ripe old age the symbol of permanency in the vagaries of time."

Because of the veneration in which he was held by military personnel and his ever active interest in the army bound the latter firmly to his person. His influence on the nature and internal development of the army was greater than has been commonly assumed. The few words which he would occasionally deliver at maneuver critiques made a profound and lasting impression on his listeners. They dealt mostly with three themes which, because they came from him, were the accepted doctrine: always remember to develop a point of main effort, issue commands only in so far as necessary, and never forget to take care of one's subordinates.

g. Ludendorff

The second of the two personalities, General der Infanterie Erich Ludendorff, exerted his influence in quite a different manner and only to a limited extent. His victorious battles in the East in 1914 and 1915 and his activities as Army Chief of Supplies and Administration from 1916 to 1918 made Ludendorff an outstanding example for every general staff officer in the field of logistical planning. The harmful effect of the predominance of the General Staff during his period of office was recognized and the army and the General Staff corrected this fault. His opposition to Hindenburg after the war, and the form of this opposition, estranged him from the army. After 1923 Ludendorff had no formal contact with the army of the Reich, and since he did not seek such contact, even a personal influence was soon lost.

In 1935, a book by Ludendorff was published, in which he defended the theory, under discussion by prominent foreign writers, that "total warfare" had evolved in World War I. Gigantic armies, the ever growing destructiveness of modern weapons — particularly of the air forces — the unexploited possibilities of propaganda, and so forth, would inevitably lead to such a development.

World War II proved Ludendorff right in high measure, and the future promises an even sharper radicalization in the conduct of war. Atomic and bacteriological warfare may destroy whole areas.

At that time Ludendorff's arguments were given much consideration

by leading army circles. In 1937, Generaloberst Ludwig Beck, then Chief of the Army General Staff, expressed approximately the following view:

> The nature of war had indeed undergone a change. Future war would tax the entire strength of a nation if it was to win or at least remain intact. Thus considered, future war would be a total war. A large portion of the national strength would go into the armies, another portion into armament industries, and a third portion into defense against enemy air attacks. The geographical situation of Germany, and the correspondingly large number of potential enemies would require the complete mobilization of all personnel, material and also moral resources. But this should not result in war developing into a fight of all against all. Irregular conduct of war in any form inevitably would lead to degeneration. He therefore vigorously rejected the employment of ideological concepts, such as the fight against international jewry.

In 1939 German army leaders were not thinking of an early war, which is probably the main reason why the problem of total war was not gone into more thoroughly at that time.

If we sum up the ideological influence of men like Gneisenau, Clausewitz, Moltke, Schlieffen, Hindenburg, Ludendorff and Seeckt upon German army leadership we come to the following conclusions. The ideas and theories of Clausewitz and the great leaders were kept alive and nursed in the German Army High Command and in the army itself. To a very considerable degree they had become the common property of the entire officers' corps. It may even be said that in certain respects the army was too deeply rooted in them, which prevented the ready acceptance of many new ideas. The German army was and remained very conservative in its way of thinking, being perhaps still

too strictly orientated towards land warfare, the form of war which predominated in the past. It will be necessary to consider also from this standpoint its discrepancies so far as the air force was concerned. See section III, f.

During his time in office Generaloberst von Seeckt had seen to it that the army remained free from politics and political influences. A sharp line of separation had been drawn between the military and the political sphere, across which line army personnel were not to step, and showed not the slightest inclination to do so. In time this trend led to exaggeration in regard to non-political soldiers. This was all very well in the time of the multi-party republic of Weimar and preserved the small army as an absolutely reliable instrument of the state; but what was all right at that time became fatal in the time of dictatorship. Hitler correctly evaluated this mentality of the German soldier, which rested on fidelity and confidence, and exploited the soldier's firmly rooted discipline and allegiance to his oath for his own calculated purposes. It must be admitted that the soldiers were glad they did not have to think politically. This was well and good below the highest level; but the fact that at highest military level political thinking had, to say the least, become shaky, led to tragic consequences.

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Appendix 6

III. Bases for Technical Developments from 1918 Onward.

a. General lessons of World War I.

The armies which entered World War I in 1914 were not adequately organized and equipped for that war in respect to personnel and materiel. What had been neglected had to be compensated for during the war, but the war itself introduced many important changes. The first surprise was that it was not the men with their own firearms but only machines and artillery which could hold down the enemy and push forward an attack. All firing from uncovered positions very quickly led to destruction. Everything went underground. The next surprise was the use of airplanes in battle. Then followed the use of poison gas as a means of combat, and finally the use of armored fighting vehicles, then for the first time called tanks. The science of technology scored one triumph after another, and hitherto inconceivable quantities of materiel were expended. But with a few exceptions rear areas remained unaffected by the war.

The strategic lessons and also the occasionally employed strategy of attrition confirmed previous knowledge in regard to the ideas of destruction. The following factors now became basic for all strategic planning: mass, technical science, vast space, new weapons, and the enormously increased demands in personnel, weapons and materiel replacements.

Attack, hitherto the way to victory, lost much of its effectiveness through the repelling power of machine weapons. In contrast to

the old linear tactics, both attack and defense now demanded depth from which to maintain frontline fighting. For this reason points of main effort had become indispensable. Tactics had almost assumed priority over strategy.

What deductions were drawn from these developments after World War I ? Initially, they were not very far-reaching. Little practical use was made of the experiences of the war and no great changes were evident in the fundamental laws of pre-war time. By and large all armied stuck to the principle of mass armies based chiefly on infantry in the event of war. This applies also to those countries which for reasons of internal politics or other reasons returned to their pre-war system. Nearly all countries, for reasons of economy, strove to keep the length of military service as short as possible. Improvements were made in regard to machine weapons, the range of all weapons, particularly of artillery, and the possibilities of artillery observation.

But new viewpoints were also beginning to take shape. Attention was first of all paid to the build-up of the air arm and antiaircraft artillery, even though these remained within the domain of the army. The armored command was for the time being brought to the state of perfection necessary to give immediate support to the infantry and render it again capable of attacking. A repetition of positional warfare was in future to be avoided under all circumstances; it was believed that for economic, if for no other, reason it would not be possible to long postpone a decision in time of war. All were agreed

on that point. The only doubters were those who were of the opinion that a renewed freezing of the operation would be unavoidable. For the rest, no one thought seriously of disarmament.

b. The 100,000-Man Army

Only the defeated, Germany and her former allies, were disarmed. These were denied universal conscription as well as modern weapons and free armament. The country's border defenses were either razed or very greatly reduced.

Germany tried to get the best out of its imposed professional army. As Seeckt pointed out it was now no longer a matter of training recruits as they came of age but of developing junior commanders. Every individual soldier, in the course of his twelve years' service, should be advanced through to the highest possible degree of training, so that when sooner or later the expected authorization for universal service would be granted he would be available as a junior commander. Through instruction, through the use of dummies and other aids, the attempt was made to keep the troops informed of the weapons forbidden by the peace treaty and of their effect. Foreign technical development in the military field was closely followed.

Basically, the theories handed down through Clausewitz, Moltke, and Schlieffen, were held on to. The experiences of World War I were evaluated.

The 100,000-man army may have sufficed for the maintenance of order in the interior, but not for defense. It was even too weak to

defend the frontier against a single one of Germany's more highly armed neighbors. This led perforce to a weakening in the method of defense, namely resistance by delaying action. It was a mixture between defense and withdrawal. Carried out over large areas this method, in case of war, was to win the time necessary either for the very doubtful assistance of the League of Nations, or, as provided for after 1930, for the improvising of further forces of resistance through an increase in the army in the case of war.

c. Military Ideologies after World War I.

The development of military ideologies after World War I did not stop with a resigned acceptance of the presence of mass armies as an unchangeable fact. It went further. Three important themes stand out.

The Italian General Douhet represented the following concept: Positional warfare is unavoidable. In future in the entire world there will be only defense. Only the airforce remains capable of attack. As "space weapon" it knows no obstacles. It can destroy the enamy's sources of power before ever a shot has been fired down below. Therewith a decision of the war can be reached more quickly than would be possible even under most favorable circumstances, through the participation of the armies. Consequently, in future, armies and navies would no longer play the decisive role. At the time Douhet found numerous adherents to his theory in Germany as well as abroad. There were many in foreign countries who even went further and demanded the elimination of both army and navy. Douhet's theory broke new trails for the development

of the air arm and helped it to become an independent factor in the conduct of war. It also clearly brought out the possibilities of "vertical envelopment". But it overlooked the possibilities of continuing the task of freezing operations in land warfare.

A further group sponsored the idea of small armies. These were in the first place the pioneers of mechanization and motorization, led by the British General Fuller. He saw tanks as the only and decisive possibility of breaking the defensive power of machine weapons. He believed that with the strong attacking power of mechanized units quick battles could be won and that these would lead to an early decision of the war. The supporters of this idea saw in the immobility of mass armies the main reason for the long delayed decision of World War I.

A third group gathered around the first Chief of Army Command in the German army who attained journalistic prominence after his retirement in 1926. General von Seeckt's theories were based on the fear that the mass armies of the 20th century had become too clumsy and therefore not sufficiently maneuverable. "The mass is only capable of crushing." What was needed, according to Seeckt, was a peacetime army which might also act as a protective and operational army, made up of professional soldiers with long terms of service, and with the provision for calling up a field army only in case of war which would employ all the nation's defensive strength. The decision, however, should in so far as possible be won with the operational army alone.

The voices which called for an increased utilization of motor vehicles in land warfare became ever more persistent. They were no

longer to be ignored. The pros and cons were the subject of increasingly lively discussion in the military journals. But right up to the thirties no country could decisively face the conclusions; the high costs alone acted as a strong deterrent.

It is true that already at an early date, both in France and in England, a portion of the army's cavalry was motorized and mechanized. In France even some motorized and mechanized divisions were created, largely at the instance of the present General de Gaulle. After that, however, France failed to make further developments, partly because of financial reasons, and no doubt partly because of the faith in the invulnerability of the Maginot Line. The British peacetime army was too small to gather exhaustive experiences with large units on wheels or caterpillar-chains. The eastern and south-eastern countries still held fast to horse traction and mounted cavalry. In Germany, up to 1934, the matter remained in the sphere of theoretical consideration. Only one troop of cavalry was experimentally motorized. * Resistance against a complete reorganization was not inconsiderable in some circles of the Army Command, particularly within the cavalry inspectorate. The latter thereby lost the chance of having any say in the subsequent organization of the armored command.

d. German Rearmament

After long years of negotiations, and in view of the impossibility of reaching agreement on general disarmament, Germany, at

* A troop of the 4th Cavalry Regiment at Potsdam.

the disarmament conference in Geneva in 1932, was, at least theoretically, freed of the military restrictions imposed upon her by the Treaty of Versailles. Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations in autumn 1933 cut the last thread of bondage.

German rearmament began in 1934, at first limited and concealed. The framework for 24 divisions was set up and a beginning made with the motorization of about one third of the cavalry.

The decisive step followed on 16 March 1935. The right of defense was proclaimed and universal military service reintroduced. The army was to consist of thirty-six divisions. The Luftwaffe was established as a third arm of the Wehrmacht. In spite of the misgivings of the Army Command, which feared that a too rapid rearmament would weaken the structure of the army, there now began an ever more precipitate and therefore uncoordinated build-up of the army. All measures were undertaken under a heavy pressure of time. Neither the construction of new barracks, nor, above all, the training of new commissioned and noncommissioned officers, could keep up with the pace set. The Army High Command was of the opinion that it was more important to proceed first with the build-up of the very incomplete twenty-four divisions before setting up new division frames which inevitably forced the tearing down of divisions already organized. Hitler decided against it. As a result, in the autumn of 1937, the army comprised forty-two large units,* and in November 1938, after the incorporation of Austria

* 32 infantry divisions, 1 mountain division, 4 motorized divisions, 3 armored divisions, 1 light division, and 1 cavalry brigade.

and the Sudentenland forty-nine large units * and also a number of GHQ troops. **

e. Build-up of the German Armored Command

The large number of mechanized and motorized divisions which came into existence within a short time is amazing. The driving element in the army was the former inspectorate of motor transport troops (later inspectorate of armored troops and of army motorization) with the far-seeing Colonel Guderian as its Chief of Staff. Quite independently Hitler, who was completely taken up with the idea of motorization, also promoted this development.

The Army High Command was very skeptical of such sudden large-scale motorization. It feared considerable difficulties in the management and movement of such great numbers of motor vehicles. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army, General Freiherr von Fritsch, and the Chief of the Army General Staff, General Beck, were in favor of first gathering experiences before making final decisions over the organization and composition of fast moving divisions. General Beck also had some doubts whether the armored divisions would be in the position of assuming all the duties of the army's cavalry which had been disbanded in the spring. So if on the one hand a certain restraint due to a basically conservative attitude was noticeable among the highest army leaders, on the other hand the protagonists of mechanization went in some respects

* 35 infantry, 3 mountain, 4 motorized, 5 armored divisions and 1 light and 1 cavalry brigade

** machine gun battalions, heavy artillery battalion, engineer battalion, railway engineer battalions, and a smoke generating battalion.

rather far in their views and demands. The latter considered the immediate creation of twelve armored divisions a necessity. Some even raised their voice demanding the complete independence of the armored command as a fourth arm of the Wehrmacht, while still others wanted to take the antitank battalions out of the infantry divisions and consolidate them in antitank divisions.

The armored command, as finally organized, showed unmistakably the influence of the French example and of the theories of General Fuller. To begin with, three armored divisions and a number of independent motorized reconnaissance battalions were created. Soon the idea gained ground that there was a lack of strong fighting forces capable of quickly exploiting the advantages gained by the armored divisions, Consequently, in 1936, four infantry divisions were motorized and collected under a corps headquarters. *

Then in 1937 the motorized light divisions were created to make up for the extinct cavalry divisions with fast moving units capable of scouting far afield. But these light divisions had a short life. Already in 1939 they were changed into armored units. Thus only the two types, tank and motorized divisions, remained in existence. They were kept until the end of the war.

Beginning in 1936 tank regiments for the immediate support of infantry were also set up. The rapidly advancing organization of further fast moving units compelled the incorporation of these three regiments **

* 2nd, 13th, 20th and 29th Infantry Divisions, under the corps headquarters of the XIV Army Corps.

** 4th Armored Brigade with the 7th, 8th and 15th tank regiments.

into new armored divisions. But the shortage of tanks was so great that it became necessary to equip the armored divisions with only one instead of the former two tank regiments.

The organization of the armored command began with the creation of units not for tactical but for operational use. Further development was confined to nothing more than the multiplication of such units. The leading thought of the army command on this subject was as follows: Germany lies in the middle of Europe with long and vulnerable frontiers in the West and in the East. In the course of any armed conflict, which while by no means immanent and even less desired * was nevertheless possible, it would have to be expected that in view of political alliances several enemies might appear at the same time. It was not possible for the German Wehrmacht to measure up to all these opponents. The objective therefore should be to strike down first one opponent and then to be free to turn at once upon a second. This not only called for highest speed in the assembly of troops for action but also speedy and concentrated striking power. The army could not meet this necessity with marching infantry alone. Also one had to figure on the disruption of railway communications by air attacks. This basic strategic idea required some thinking and planning covering far larger areas than the experiences of World War I would call for. An attempt to meet this requirement was made through corresponding training in

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* Consult opinion and memorandum of Chief of General Staff, General Beck, endorsed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, against the attack on Czechoslovakia planned by top government leaders.

command and General Staff maneuvers.

f. Cooperation Between Army and Airforce

Army leaders also had to tackle the problem of cooperation between the army and the airforce. Here two basically different views came into conflict. The leading circles of the Luftwaffe were adherents of the theory of General Douhet (see p. 200). These saw the surest and quickest possibilities of success in an operational air war. In view of the limited number of their own flying units they therefore planned only a very small fighting force which would give immediate support to the army. Also the allocations of aircraft observation units and antiaircraft artillery were, according to army opinion, insufficient.

The army also defended the view that in the next war in which Germany would be involved the decision would be reached on land. Consequently the requirements and possibilities of the army should receive priority consideration in Wehrmacht plans regarding the use of the airforce. The important thing, they maintained, was to reach an early decision on land. To obtain this end the army needed the immediate support of strong elements of the Luftwaffe, while other elements should be directed against targets whose destruction would also contribute to an acceleration of a decision on land. In other words, the conduct of the air war should be completely governed by the decisions of the land war. In view of the indulgence which the Reich Minister for War had hitherto shown other branches of the Wehrmacht, which showed no guarantee

for a realistic consideration of the army's needs in case of war, the Army High Command went one step further. Late in 1937 it demanded that in time of war the Wehrmacht and the army commands should be brought under one head. These disputes were brought to an end on 4 February 1938 through the removal of the leading personalities of the Army High Command. For the time being the Luftwaffe stuck to their point of view — until the realities of the war led to demands which came very close to those which had been made by the Army Command.

g. Improvisation as a Result of Haste

The great haste in which the army was built up had been the result of demands made by the highest government authority. This haste, moreover, extended to all branches of the service, with the exception of the cavalry. The effect was precisely what the Army High Command had predicted, and had wished to avoid: Quantity took the place of quality, and everywhere, already in peacetime, there was evidence of makeshift.

The demands for the build-up of the army were very high. Even on the basis of an average of six battalions and batteries for each new division, this, as of August 1937, already meant more than a general fourfold increase in the forces. Each company and each battery within less than four years had to furnish cadres at least twice to provide personnel for the creation of new troop units. Not only the internal structure suffered from this repeated tearing apart but also proper military training suffered by the lack of instructors. So already

before the war there appeared the practice of improvisation which is normally accepted as a matter-of-course only in the advance stages of a war. Naturally the striking power of the army suffered correspondingly.

The Army High Command did not get the support it had asked for of the Reich Minister of War and was ignored by government leaders.

The numerical increase of reservists was at first very small, and because of the weakness of the first postwar age classes improvement was very slow. The preparations for general mobilization, including the material supply problem, were far from being completed. The High Command therefore thought that 1943 was the earliest date when the army might be made ready for war. It did not figure on an armed conflict before 1938 and could therefore hope that there would be time for the consolidation of the army.

IV. Future Developments.

If we survey the entire military era since the Napoleonic wars we can clearly see that the Prussian-German army as well as the armies of the other powers have, in the course of these 130 years, developed from professional armies to national armies. The way to this goal, the stages and their duration, may have varied from country to country, but the result was the same. Determinants for these developments were the ideological and technical foundations which have been explained in the previous chapters.

Taken all in all it still looks as if everything were proceeding along the same old track. The increasing tension between East and West causes all who feel threatened to resort to the old stand-by of exploiting defense resources. Apart from strengthening the air forces the available strength of the armies, above all, are being increased. Apparently the need for mass armies still continues, today as also in both the first and second world wars. The number of divisions which Soviet Russia keeps armed remains the terrible phantom of Western Europe.

For all that we stand on the threshold of a complete change, indeed we are in the midst of it already. It is being brought about by the breath-taking pace set by technical development, through the rapid perfectioning of combustion engines on land and particularly in the air, and through the invention of completely new weapons whose destructive power and effect cannot yet be estimated.

Thus the still remaining mass armies and the problems of handling

them are in the last analysis only the final stages of a bygone era, and the transition stages to something new. Whither the new development will lead no one can predict with absolute certainty. One can only surmise. The only thing certain is that technical progress will not stop; the ever restless human spirit will not allow a period of standing still. What furthermore appears certain is that on the basis of this development future wars will need fewer combat troops than have hitherto been necessary. Nevertheless, all members of waring nations will be drafted into war service of one kind or another. Total war, hitherto only partially carried out, will become an absolute reality in the next major conflict, and every member of every nation involved will actively or passively be drawn into it.

The flying range and the speed of airplanes reduce all former problems of space. The part played by the airforce, with its increasing adaptation of new weapons (atom bombs and bacteria and rocket weapons), will become ever more dominant. In the future this arm will unquestionably be the most important branch of the armed services. In this respect the theories of General Douhet are close to being realized.

If the airforce thus steps into first position the army must perforce move into the second place. But this does not mean that it will in time be reduced to insignificance. The airforce can only attack, but it is not capable of taking possession and holding on to what it has attacked. It cannot defend, it cannot secure, it can only shield. Movement alone is its element.

So these tasks at least, even in future wars, will surely remain

the duty of the army. At the very least someone must be there to keep the enemy away from air bases. But defensive and protective measures will by no means exhaust the functions of the army. Also in the future it will have to be assigned important operational goals. "Vertical" and "horizontal" envelopments will have to be coordinated.

But the army will have to adapt itself to the consequences of progress in technical development. Horses, for instance, are unthinkable in a future army. Modern armies will be fully mechanized, and strong airborne units will have to be attached to them. But it will scarcely be possible financially to keep mechanized mass armies up-to-date. It may be expected that this will perforce compel a numerical limitation. But also in the future it will not be possible to do without a large number of troops for an increasing number of secondary duties connected with such matters as security and occupation. For such purposes the forces concerned will not need to be mechanized. But it will be well to strive toward their maximum emergency motorization since a regular use of railways for their movements will scarcely be possible in the future. It follows from the above that a division will have to be made between an active, mechanized combat army, kept small in size, and a security army to be recruited only in case of general mobilization. This brings us to a synthesis of the views of Douhet and Seeckt.

However much forms and means may change, certain fundamental principles will remain. There will remain the striving towards the quickest possible destruction of the enemy's main strength* in order to bring about the earliest possible decision of the war. There will remain a

* This strength must also be sought in the enemy's economic resources

division on the strategic, operational and tactical level. And there will also remain, among other things, the laws relative to points of main effort and those relative to cooperation between the various arms and branches of the service. What will surely be new, on the other hand, will be the spread of a future war into spaces of hitherto unknown extent, a struggle between continents in which oceans will present no obstacle. What further surprises a future war may bring, nobody knows. That depends to a large extent on the intervening space of time.

signed: Westphal